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MASSES

MAY, 1930 15 Cents



A MAGAZINE OF WORKERS ART AND LITERATURE

SONGS
of the
NEGRO
WORKER
BOOKS
MOVIES
WORKERS
ART

The Young Men Write To UPTON SINCLAIR

A Young Man of Holland:—"I'm a young teacher and I've learned some English. And this English I will use to tell you how much I'm admiring your books. They are a cry for a better world! Perhaps, Mr. Sinclair, you're laughing for these words and this **imperfect** letter. Oh, I would I could tell you, how fine your books are! I've written you this letter to tell you how appreciated your books are in Holland . . . We, young men in Holland, often are so full of admiration for America and the American civilization, we often look to America with great astonished eyes and a desiring heart. But now I've learned something others."—A. D. Gerritsen, Utrecht.

A Young Man of Japan:—"The translations of your works, which have been published in this country, amount to a dozen or more, and they have exerted a deep influence on the people of Japan. As for me, I have read almost all of your works during my student days, (I graduated from the Tokyo Imperial University last year), and my life has been considerably changed as a consequence. At present there are many 'Sinclairians' in Japan, who are desiring earnestly to learn your biography."—Shinobu Ono, Tokyo.

A Young Man of China:—"The Chinese translation of your **King Coal** came into my hand yesterday morning and I finished it this evening. I cannot tell you how magnificent it is! It is my lover! It is the best book that I have read."—S. T. Yang, Tsingtao.

A Young Man of India:—"I beg to intimate to you that your publication of **Boston** is extremely charming with utmost reflection of a modern civilization. It needs prompt translation into different languages to usefully suit many other nations of the world than the English. I therefore request you, sir, to kindly enable me to render its Hindi version, most popular vernacular of India."—N. K. Nigam, Delhi.

A Young Man of Iceland:—"Upton Sinclair's warfare is thorough and wholehearted. . . Such men remind us of the ancient heroes of legends, who had to fight against poison-spewing dragons and all the monsters of hell."—H. K. Laxness, Reykjavik.

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Gossidat, the State Publishing House of Russia, reports a sale of more than a million copies of the books of Upton Sinclair. A uniform edition in preparation, also 100,000 copies of **Jimmie Higgins** at 60 kopecks.

The libraries of Sweden report the books of Upton Sinclair most in demand of any author, native or foreign. **Oil** and **Boston** are best-sellers in Germany, the former having passed 100,000, the latter 75,000. The **Western Australian**, of Fremantle, took a plebescite of its readers, and reports Upton Sinclair the most popular living novelist of Australia. A board of censors, headed by a clerical professor and a Franciscan monk, have barred his books from Yugoslavia. Mussolini also bars them.

Two new books by Upton Sinclair are published this spring. Concerning **Mountain City**, a novel, Art Shields writes for the **Federated Press**: "What Denver will say about **Mountain City** will be jolly . . . Sinclair is more than our best muckraker, he is America's outstanding labor novelist."

Mental Radio is a study of telepathy and clairvoyance: not a book of bunk, but a record of several hundred careful experiments made by the author and his wife, with 283 drawings, revealing some new power of the mind which we do not understand, but about which we tell you as carefully as we know how. Introduction by Professor William McDougall, who says: "The experiments were so remarkably successful as to rank among the very best hitherto reported."

Price of **Mountain City**, \$2.50 postpaid. Price of **Mental Radio**, \$3.00 postpaid. Send for price list of all books by Upton Sinclair: 17 novels, 9 plays, and 14 miscellaneous works, available in cloth and paper bindings, at prices from five dollars to five cents.

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MICHAEL GOLD

NOTES OF THE MONTH

The London Conference passed out in the way Will Rogers, Art Young and other sages predicted; it just naturally gassed itself to death. Who said Disarmament? Aren't the capitalist nations arming themselves faster than ever before in history?

The next world war is sure to come within the decade. Anyone who can't smell this on the wind belongs in the political nursery. War—universal war, with fleets of airplanes bombing the cities into bloody smithereens! Every man, woman, child and dog on the firing line! War—a real war this time, which will make the last one look as primitive and naive as Custer's Last Stand.

A Challenge—War is the ultimate challenge to all this new herd of B. and O. Plan liberals. Gentlemen, you claim your skilful compromises can make capitalism work to the satisfaction both of profiteer and producer. You tell us there is no class struggle, and that J. P. Morgan and a steel mill slave have the same common stake in industry.

But how about War? How are you going to prevent the next war which is due, and which is sure to wreck all these fine schemes you have laid for a slow, progressive and pleasant journey into the Benevolent Feudalism?

Why Wars Are Inevitable—Marx pointed out sixty years ago why capitalist states must make war. The more efficient they become, and the more goods they produce, the greater grows the gap between consumption and production.

Workers and farmers never receive the full value of their toil in the form of wages. They inevitably produce more than they are allowed to consume. Hence there is always a mounting surplus of goods.

Hence, a crisis always follows a period of intense prosperity. The warehouses are choked with goods, while men walk the streets starving. (The kept economists call this paradox a "business cycle," and explain it by astrology.)

And hence, the terrific pressure for foreign markets. These goods must be dumped somewhere if panics are to be averted. War and unemployment are thus as necessary to capitalism as a man's heart and bowels are to his body.

Liberals think they can remove the diseased parts of capitalism without killing the patient. They are Christian Scientists, however, not surgeons. The B. & O. Plan, even if successful, means only that war is hastened.

The Well-Known Intellectuals—Why is there such a tendency

to despise the intellectuals in the labor movement? It is an unhealthy tendency at times, a form of labor obscurantism; a hostility to those ideals without which Labor is nothing.

Yet there is justification for the prejudice. Who in America can forget what the "intellectuals" did during the late war? Everyone knows now that J. P. Morgan and a few others forced America in. But at the time, it was Walter Lippman and his *New Republic* group that boasted in their paper that the "intellectuals had willed the war."

Yes, they willed it; they provided all the clever liberal reasons, all the decorative lies. They went in with George Creel into the propaganda bureau. They went into the army intelligence service and stool-pigeoned on their friends. Conscientious objectors found themselves being humiliatingly examined for their sanity by "liberal" alienists. Men like William Bohn, now director of the Rand School, exposed pacifist "plots" in the *New York Times*. Other liberals dressed up in fancy army uniforms and broke strikes. Few were in the trenches, most were busy ratting it at home in one form or another.

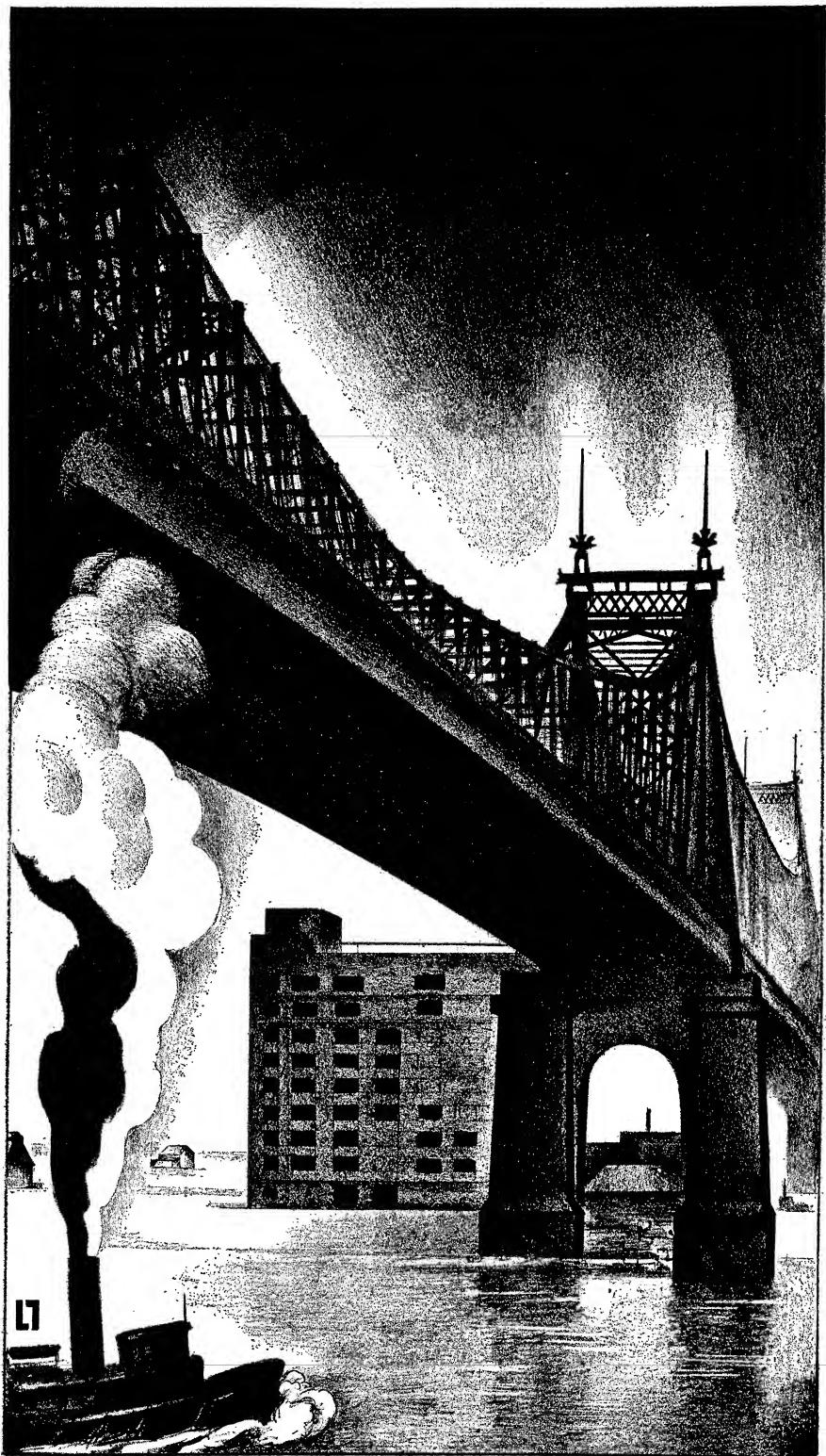
Even gangsters may be loyal to something, but the average American intellectual is quicksilver. He has no spine. He has no convictions. He is a pacifist now; beware of him when the bugles blow for the next war; he'll be a dangerous rat again.

Who invented company unionism? The type of intellectual who reads the liberal magazines. Who invented the B. and O. Plan, a system under which labor unions inevitably lose their membership and vitality? Otto Beyer and his clever Ph. D. friends invented it.

The worker is right when he distrusts the intellectuals. But he needs some of them; and so he has learned to test them with fire before he gives them his confidence. It's not a bad idea.

The New Freeman—Welcome to the *New Freeman*, the liberal weekly which has just appeared. Welcome! The make-up is lousy, and gives a reader the typographical heebie-jeebies. The authors are smart as hell, but use about twice as many words as are necessary in a rapid age. All the editors are women. This looks phoney to some of us who think Man was made to be Woman's helpmate, and has a few rights, bejeezis!

The paper has other faults. Why do people write for it in the grand style that made Walter Pater so beloved among the fairies of Oxford? No American uses that style any more unless he is drunk and wants to highhat a dumb cop and make him sore.



QUEENS BRIDGE, NEW YORK

—Lithograph by Louis Lozowick

And why are there articles "exposing" the Communist Party of America? This is becoming such a popular sport that it is really getting to be vulgar. Why not print at least one article explaining Communism in A. B. C. fashion for all the little highbrows who've never read a reputable book on the subject? What a startling innovation that would be! I, for one, am tired of reading in liberal and Socialist journals nothing but lurid tales about the crimes of the Communists. Leave such things to Grover Whalen my dear Miss New Freeman.

Yet welcome, sweetheart! Spring is here, and somehow all the girls look good to ye editor of ye *New Masses*. May we call some afternoon and throw our feet on your desk and talk Liter-

ature and the Problems of Sex? We promise to listen to everything you say. We never went beyond public school, but have acquired a little polish, by heck.

We hope you make good in this tough land. The old *Freeman* was just a little more consistent and pugnacious than the other liberal weeklies. May the *New Freeman* be even more gay and unafraid. And may your circulation manager be overworked, and your editors underworked, and may you escape middle-age, and Communist phobias, and pomposity, and "good citizenship" and all the other diseases that beset a bourgeois liberal weekly. And do stop trying so hard to be a "gentleman!"

Chicken and Egg—There can never be a great culture in this country until there is a great labor movement. The Christian Scientists believe that Rousseau created the French Revolution. We materialists know that the French Revolution created Rousseau.

And that the American labor movement created Carl Sandburg, Jack London, Sherwood Anderson, Upton Sinclair, John Reed, and dozens of others.

Ours is still an imperfect and muddled movement. The literary products have reflected this muddlement. But the time will come when we will know ourselves better. Then labor artists and writers will speak with clear trumpet notes and classic genius. In Germany and Russia this is already true.

Only the working-class lives close to earth's reality: the sailors at sea, the farmers under the sky, the factory hands at the levers of giant machines. The workers live epically, in strike, tragedy, work, revolution. Only the workers are intoxicated with the enormous music of the future.

The bourgeoisie is never inspired by anything but money. Their so-called "individualism" is nothing but a shopkeeper's provincialism and greed. Stock market; bridge table; golf links; night club—what can be produced in such a spiritual environment but quantities of insincere tripe?

Carl Sandburg—In an introduction to a book of Steichen's photographs, published recently, Carl Sandburg advances the thesis that an artist has only two alternatives in America; he must be either a commercial, or a revolutionary artist.

We agree. We do not agree, however, with Sandburg when he chooses commercial art for himself; glorifies it, in this amazing and shameless essay, and advises the youth to sell their talents to Big Business.

Sandburg is in his decadence. Once he believed in the Revolution, and it made him an inspired American poet; now he believes in Big Business, and is a kind of literary Tex Guinan who entertains the fat, idle ladies who hang around women's clubs.

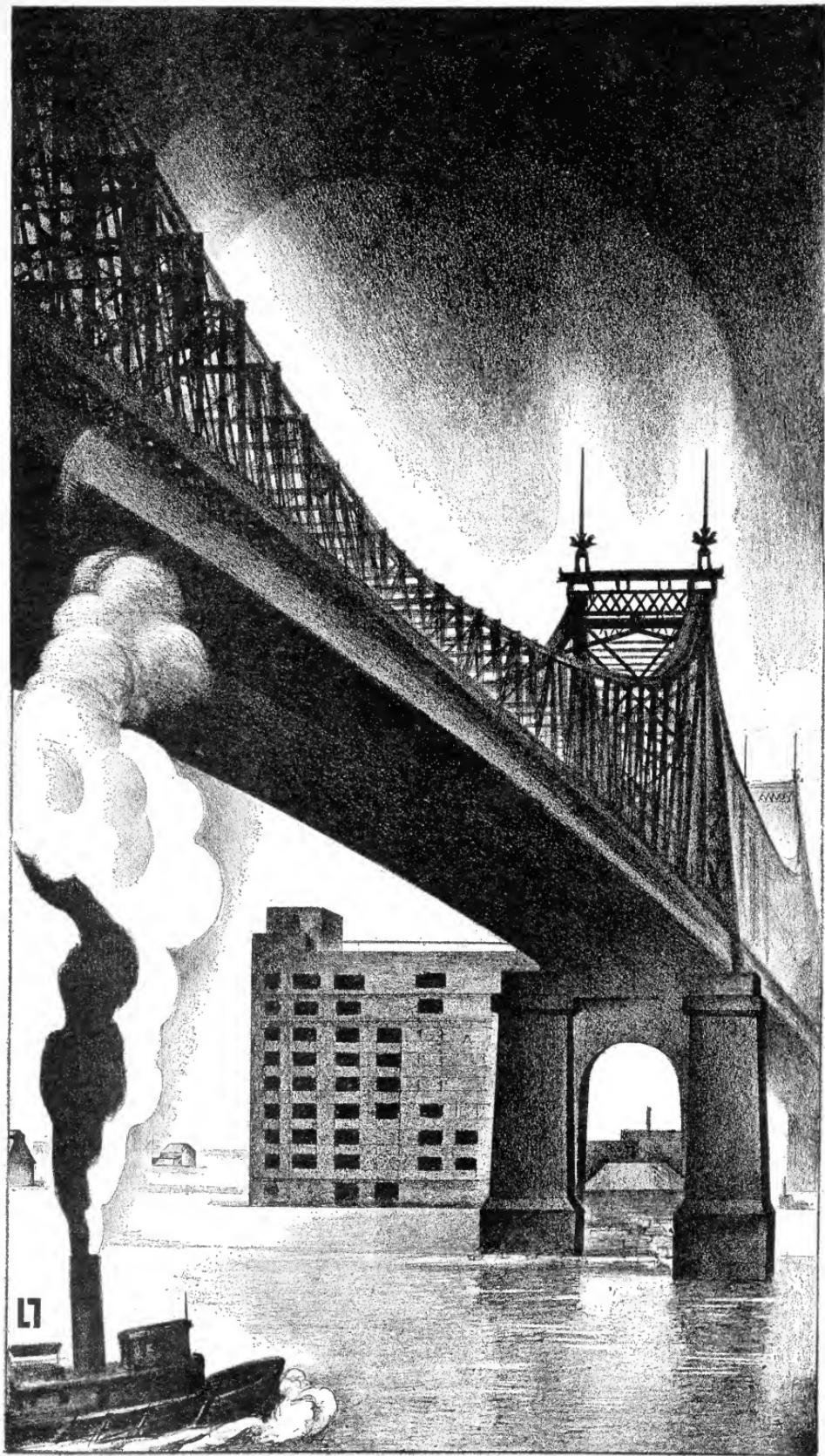
Paul Peters—America is as full of ex-radicals as an old mattress is of bugs. At their best, they are harmless entertainers like Sandburg, or tired, cynical newspapermen, business racketeers and migratory bums.

At their worst they are the social-fascist type of labor leader, believing in nothing, and hanging on grimly to a union job because the salary is so good. Or they become those literary stool-pigeons on bourgeois newspapers and magazines who specialize in exposing the revolutionary movement.

A comrade once talked mournfully to Kropotkin about these renegade radicals. The great anarchist answered: "What does it matter, my friend, if these people do desert? We have already had the best in them! We have had their youth!"

Life goes on! The Revolution goes on! A generation sinks into apathy and cowardice; a new generation takes its place. Sandburg passes on; and in the obscurity of factories, mines, prisons and little towns, dozens of young talents are being shaped by the Revolution to voice its immense themes.

Is it premature to say a few words about Paul Peters? Scenes from his plays have appeared in the *New Masses*; otherwise he



QUEENS BRIDGE, NEW YORK

—Lithograph by Louis Lozowick



—Drawn by Art Young

Henry L. Stimson and the click-click chorus of American stenographers in the naval disarmament comedy produced in London.

is yet unknown. For the past five years he has been working all over America; in southern textile mills, on the docks of New Orleans, in coal mines, in western construction camps, now for months in a Pittsburgh steel mill.

He has written four full-length plays; each on a labor theme, each the revelation of a group soul. I like best his *Wharf Nigger*; it is the story of a group of Negro longshoremen on the New Orleans docks. But the other plays are powerful, too; the textile drama, the coal miners' story, the swift, bitter play about a group of western I. W. W.

Wharf Nigger, I am convinced, is as intensely felt and constructed as the best of Eugene O'Neill, besides having a revolutionary clarity which shows that Peters belongs to a younger and less muddled generation.

Why haven't we a publishing house in this country to see that such plays as these are made known to the world? Why haven't we a revolutionary theatre? What strength, what faith there is in a Paul Peters to write plays such as these in a vacuum! And he is writing more, and will go on writing. He is a dogged soldier of the revolutionary ideal; nothing can stop him.

He will be as famous as Eugene O'Neill some day. This is certain; though only a few of us know it as yet. Meanwhile the road is hard; but this struggle, this bitter obscurity is our discipline; it is what makes us different from the other writers, it is our school.

The revolutionary writer either succumbs early in his career, or goes on to greatness. There is no middle ground of mediocrity for him: no escape. This has been true so often; it is sure to be true again with Paul Peters and other young writers in the *New Masses*.

President Green—Pres. Green of the A. F. of L. must be sleeping badly nights. A few weeks ago he told a Congressional committee

NEWS OF THE THEATRICAL WORLD

Light Comedy

From Our London Correspondent

London, April 12.—The light comedy production, *Parley, Parley, Whose Got the Parley*, is nearing its close. This much heralded adventure into the world's spotlight opened January 21. The author, Ramsey MacDonald, who was backed by Herbert Hoover and about three million dollars of United States Government money, is still of the opinion that it is a good show. Newspapers have treated it kindly and capitalists generally enjoyed the wisecracks by the five leading diplomat-comedians.

But for all that it was plainly dull and the public was not much interested. The plot was based on the idea that a group of nations, five if possible, ought to start reducing their fighting equipment, especially the navy, as a move toward peace. In the first act this policy is found to be impractical (everything has to be practical), so it is decided to scrap a few obsolete battle ships, (laughter) but to keep on building more effective, more modern fighting boats, bombing airplanes, etc.

There were a few jolly songs, such as "We'll Take a Battle Ship Holiday, and How!" Some of the comedians threatened to leave the show on several occasions. The jokes of Henry L. Stimson of America were a bit pale. But the chorus of American stenographers was a success. No doubt the show will be revived in a few months with new gags, and slight changes in the acts.

London, England

ART YOUNG

that he feared a revolution in this country, if the unemployment problem were not solved. Why so worried, Bill? Haven't you heard about Heywood Broun's Give-A-Job-Till-June movement? That's solving it, Comrade.

Hard Times—A certain "labor leader we know in New York has been suffering like hell recently. First he lost a lot of money in the stock market crash, and later, because of unemployment, his union had to cut his salary from \$175 to \$150 per week, plus expenses. He blames it all on the left wing in his union.

A Question—Mrs. J. Pierpont Rockefeller, Jr. writes to say she thinks it a crime the way businessmen are suppressed in Soviet Russia. "Do you call that Socialism?" she demands. "Ain't these people just as equal as you and I, and maybe more so?"

Our answer is, "No!"

A Mistake—John Brown, William Lloyd Garrison and Abe Lincoln paid a visit to New York recently and happened to be in Union Square when the clubbing began. They were severely drubbed by a squad of cops who took them for Communists. All are recovering nicely in the Paradise Hospital.

Another Item—A self-confessed revolutionist named Thos. Jefferson has been sentenced to six months on the chain-gang in Virginia. He is alleged to have stated in a speech; "To hell with King George! Hurray for liberty!"

The Judge said he heartily wished there were a law to hang such Reds. "I'd like to have you alone in a locked room for half an hour, to show you a few things about America," said the Judge. Jefferson bit his lip and muttered, "I wish to God we could be alone, Judge!"

Jeff will be deported to Bulgaria at the end of his term.

MAY, 1930



—Drawn by Art Young

Henry L. Stimson and the click-click chorus of American stenographers in the naval disarmament comedy produced in London.

PHILIP SCHATZ

SONGS of the NEGRO WORKER

Ten years ago Negro spirituals moved from their ramshackle churches in the South to Broadway, the street where stock gamblers talk about art and artists talk about the stock market.

Fad-hunting ladies from Park Avenue, aesthetes from Greenwich Village, and fashionable idlers rub shoulders today to hear slaves' songs to a god who will deliver them from servitude.

However, it is doubtful if they picture the same kind of heaven that the black slaves sang about. Comfortably seated in the dress circle, the bourgeois patrons of "Negro culture" rest satisfied in the assurance that there will be a Jim Crow heaven for the black singers they applaud, just as there are Jim Crow churches, in which the spirituals originated.

It is obvious that the life of the Negro worker makes necessary a particularly convincing promise of pie in the sky to pay for an endless diet of salt pork, corn pone, lynchings and wage-slavery.

The fact that the Negro workers themselves have created the music which was once so soothing a balm for their oppression has misled most of America's cultural world into a belief that these songs are the only genuine artistic expression of the Negro.

Negro culture is perhaps the most genuine workers' culture in America despite the fact that it is being corrupted by bourgeois influences. However, spirituals are not the most genuine expression of the Negro worker.

The black worker finds little place in his workaday songs for a "heavenly father." When the pick is heavy and the ground is hard, he finds his solace in singing of an earthy woman. He sings not of any "sweet chariot comin' for to carry him home," but of the freight train which will take him to the next construction job or turpentine camp.

Whatever illusions the black worker may have about the things which await him after his death, he knows that this life offers him only the prospect of toil and oppression. No kind old god, smiling like a Sunday school teacher at a fish fry, comes to lighten the back breaking labors of the black worker. Instead, his "cap'n," the white superintendent, the hardfisted taskmaster of wage-slavery, stands ready to kick new strength into every back which has reached the breaking point.

*I tol' my cap'n that my feet was col'
"God damn yo' feet, let the car wheel roll."
Cap'n, cap'n, old Ben won't pull.
"God damn his soul, put the harness on the bull."
Cap'n, Cap'n, the track is wet.
"Knock'er right on, black boy, till the evenin' sun do set.
Cap'n, cap'n, can't you tell
The track is slick and cold as hell.*

It is significant that even when the Negro worker sings spirituals in his workday occupations, the songs express his desire to be free from his job and from the danger of going to bed with an empty belly.

*I wants to go to heaven.
Set in de angels' seat;
I wants to go to heaven,
Eat what de angels eat.*

*When I get to heaven
Gonna ease, ease,
Me an' my God
Gonna do as we please.*

But on the earth, the Negro knows he can't "ease." He must

work. And he must do as his boss pleases, for his job is his only shield against starvation.

*Reason I stay on job so long,
Oh, reason I stay on job so long,
O Lawd, reason I stay on job so long,
Hot flambotia and coffee strong.
Hot flambotia and coffee strong,
Yes, Lawd, hot flambotia and coffee strong,
O Lawd, hot flambotia and coffee strong,
Reason I stay on job so long.*

In the South, where any effort at organizing even white workers is met with violence, the Negro is largely dependent for his job on the good will of his cap'n or his walker, the walking overseer or superintendent of road building or railroad jobs.

The Negro to whom chattel slavery has left a heritage of intensified exploitation, may well fear his boss a hundred times more than the most underpaid and spiritless white slave of the belt, for the walker holds life and death in the shack where he keeps the time cards. The black worker knows it and sings about it, just as he sings of his other workaday woes:

*I don't want no,
Want no trouble with de walker.
I don't want no,
Want no trouble with de walker.
I want to go home,
Lawd, Lawd, I wanna go home.
Oh, me an' my buddy
Jes' came here this mornin'
Wanta go home,
Lawd, Lawd, wanna go home.
I can drive it,
Drive it along as anybody.
Wanta go home,
Lawd, Lawd, wanna go home.*

But a life-time of "hot flambotia and coffee strong," even to a hungry Negro worker may become tiresome. When the sun begins to sink in the west and the laborer drops his hammer to wipe the sweat from his face, he may find little satisfaction in looking forward to his supper.

It seems unlikely that the ladies from Park Avenue would care for songs about corn and tomatoes, which seem vulgar vegetables even to ordinary white collar workers. But to the Negro food, common, coarse, belly-filling food, is something to sing about. The food that he can never buy with the miserable wages he earns for building the nation's roads and clearing the nation's forests, becomes glorified in the songs the black worker sings as he swings his hammer.

*I don't want no,
Want no cornbread, peas an' molasses:
I don't want no,
Want no cornbread peas an' molasses,
At supper time,
Lawd, Lawd, at supper time.
Oh, hand me down a
Can o' corn an' tomatoes,
For my meal,
Lawd, Lawd, for my meal.*

In the South, race lines and class lines are generally the same. Today as before the Civil War, the ruling class is white, and the Negro worker's elementary understanding of class distinction finds a place in his singing.

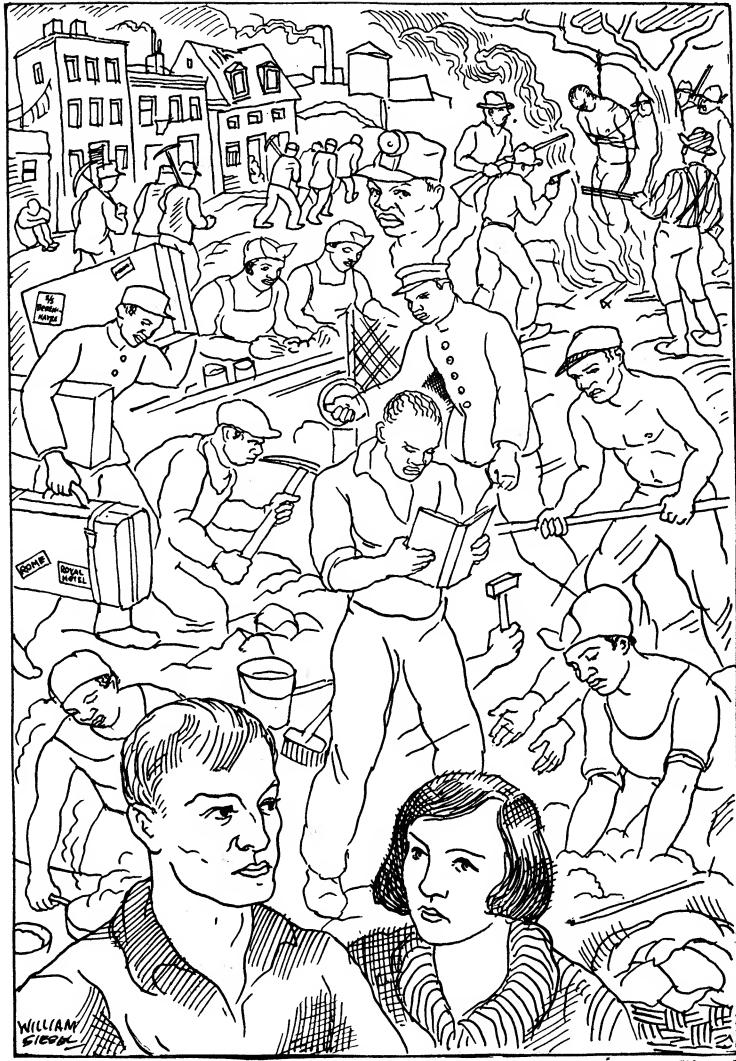
*Missus in de big house,
Mammy in de yard,
Missus holdin' her white hands,
Mammy workin' hard.
Ole marse ridin' all time,
Niggers workin' roun'*



—Drawn by Walter Quirt



The white bourgeois version of the Negro



—as the white worker knows him. —Drawn by William Siegel.

*Marse sleepin' day time
Niggers diggin' in the groun'.*

Or else he sings of the class struggle even more articulately:

*Niggers plant cotton,
Niggers pick it out,
White man pockets money,
Nigger does without.*

Despite the rapid industrialization of the South, agriculture is important, and the black farmer still has reason to sing of the serfdom into which he escaped from chattel slavery.

*Up at fo' 'clock
Work till dark,
Wages han'
I'm de man.
Twelve a month an' boa'd
Lawd, Twelve a month an' boa'd.
Hope to die
Mo' I try,
I comes out,
Owin' boss mo',
I comes out
Lawd, owin' boss mo'.*

Aware of the fact that his work wins him nothing but exploitation, poverty and lynchings, the Negro also knows that there is good in his work.

*Early in the spring, plowin' my lan'
Every body calls me the wages man,
Baby, baby.*

*Next down de row with guano horn
Never work so hard since I've been born,
Baby, baby.*

*Little bit later I swings de hoe,
I'se de nigger dat leads de row,
Baby, baby, baby.*

*Sack an' basket all that I pick,
Never stop for nothin', even if you sick,
Baby, baby.*

*White man in starched shirt settin' in shade,
Laziest man that God ever made,
Baby, baby.*

Conscious of the strength in bodies which have industrialized the South, the Negro worker sings of a much more real hero than the god of his enslaved ancestors. He sings of a flesh and blood hero, a powerful worker, a giant of a man with the muscles of a tiger rippling under his shiny black skin. A "steel driver" who made mountains crumble with his nine-pound hammer and his rock drill, John Henry is the hero of the greatest proletarian epic ever created.

There are perhaps dozens of versions of the song which tells John Henry's story. Some are short, some are long, in some he was a railroad man, in most he was a steel driver, but in all of them "he died with his hammer in his hand." He died on the job.

The gist of the song, without the trimmings it has acquired through decades of singing, is that John Henry, who prided himself on his ability as a steel driver, matched himself against a steam drill and tried to drive his own drill into the ground before the steam drill stopped.

*John Henry say one day
"Man ain't nothin' but a man,
Befo' I'll be dogged aroun'
I'll die wid de hammer in my han'"*

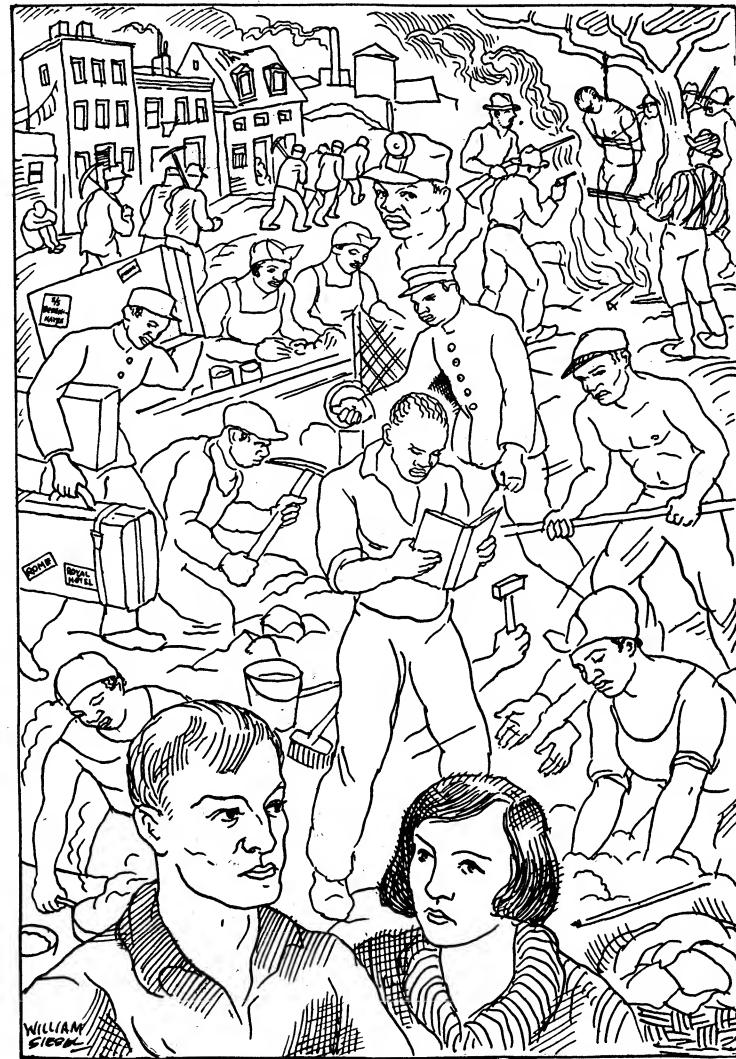
*John Henry said to his captain,
"Man ain't nothin' but a man,*

MAY, 1930

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The white bourgeois version of the Negro



—as the white worker knows him.

—Drawn by William Siegel.



No Job—Spring, 1930.

—Lithograph by Louis Lozowick

*Befo' I work sun to sun,
I'd die wid de hammer in my han'."*

*John Henry went up to the mountain
To beat that steam drill down:
But John Henry was so small, rock so high,
Laid down his hammer an' he died.*

The current vogue of spirituals, unimportant in itself, is significant because it shouts aloud the well known secret of the color line in art, which has been drawn with the development of black artists, poets, writers and singers.

In the past five years there have been a dozen dramas and musical comedies either dealing with Negro life or employing Negroes in important parts. There have been "all-colored revues." The talkies, catching Hollywood hard-up for material have forced the white producers to use Negro talent and Negro subjects. "Negro culture" is being encouraged on a wholesale scale, and idle, muddled minds have seized on it as a new fad.

And while the bodies remain black, the work of the Negro artists is being bleached of all the realness, sincerity and vitality of art which has its roots in life.

Only the work songs have escaped the taint so far. Maybe the work songs will not survive the industrialization of the South. May-be the shrieking of the steam drill which killed John Henry will silence the singing of the black worker. But not for long. Above the madhouse noises of the American machine-age the new, black slaves of the Belt will join their voices with those of their white comrades in a song of revolution.

A SOUTHERN COTTON MILL RHYME*

*I lived in a town a way down south
By the name of Buffalo
And worked in a mill with the rest of the trash
As we're often called you know.*

*You Factory Folks who read this rhyme
Will surely understand
The reason why I love you so
Is I'm a Factory Hand.*

*While standing here between my looms
You know I lose no time
To keep my shuttles in a whiz
And write this little rhyme.*

*We rise up early in the morn
And work all day real hard
To buy our little meal and bread
And sugar tea and lard.*

*We work from weeks end to weeks end
And never lose a day
And when that awful pay day comes
We draw our little pay.*

*We then go home on pay day night
And sit down in a chair
The merchant raps upon the door
He's come to get his share.*

*When all our little debts are paid
And nothing left behind
We turn our pockets wrong side out
But not a cent can find.*

*We rise up early in the morn
And toil from sun to late
We have no time to primp
And fix and dress right up to date.*

*Our children they grow up unlearned
No time to go to school
Almost before they've learned to walk
They learn to spin or spool.*

*The Boss men jerk them round and
Round and whistle very keen
I'll tell you what the Factory kids
Are really treated mean.*

*The folks in town who dress so fine
And spends their money free
Will hardly look at a factory hand
Who dresses like you and me.*

*As we go walking down the street
All wrapped in lint and strings
They call us fools and factory trash
And other low down names*

*Just let them wear their watches fine
And golden chains and rings,
But when the great Revolution comes
They'll have to shed those things.*

* To my knowledge this song has never appeared in print before. I came upon it in this fashion: We were sitting in the National Textile Workers Union Hall in Charlotte, N. C. waiting for the meeting to begin. It was a cold night. Somebody started Solidarity and then we sang Ella May's "ballets." Almost everybody knew them since many of the workers in the Union Hall were strikers from Gastonia and Bessemer City. At the end of one of the songs, Daisy McDonald of Gastonia, asked her husband to lead The Southern Cotton Mill Rhyme. Some of us had not heard this song before and Mr. McDonald explained that many years ago he had worked at the loom next to a man in a mill in Buffalo, South Carolina. He said this weaver had spoken out the words of the Rhyme under the noise of the looms, making them up as he worked. And the song has gone from one worker to another and now it is known to hundreds of cotton mill hands who sing it as the workers did that night in the hall in Charlotte, N. C.

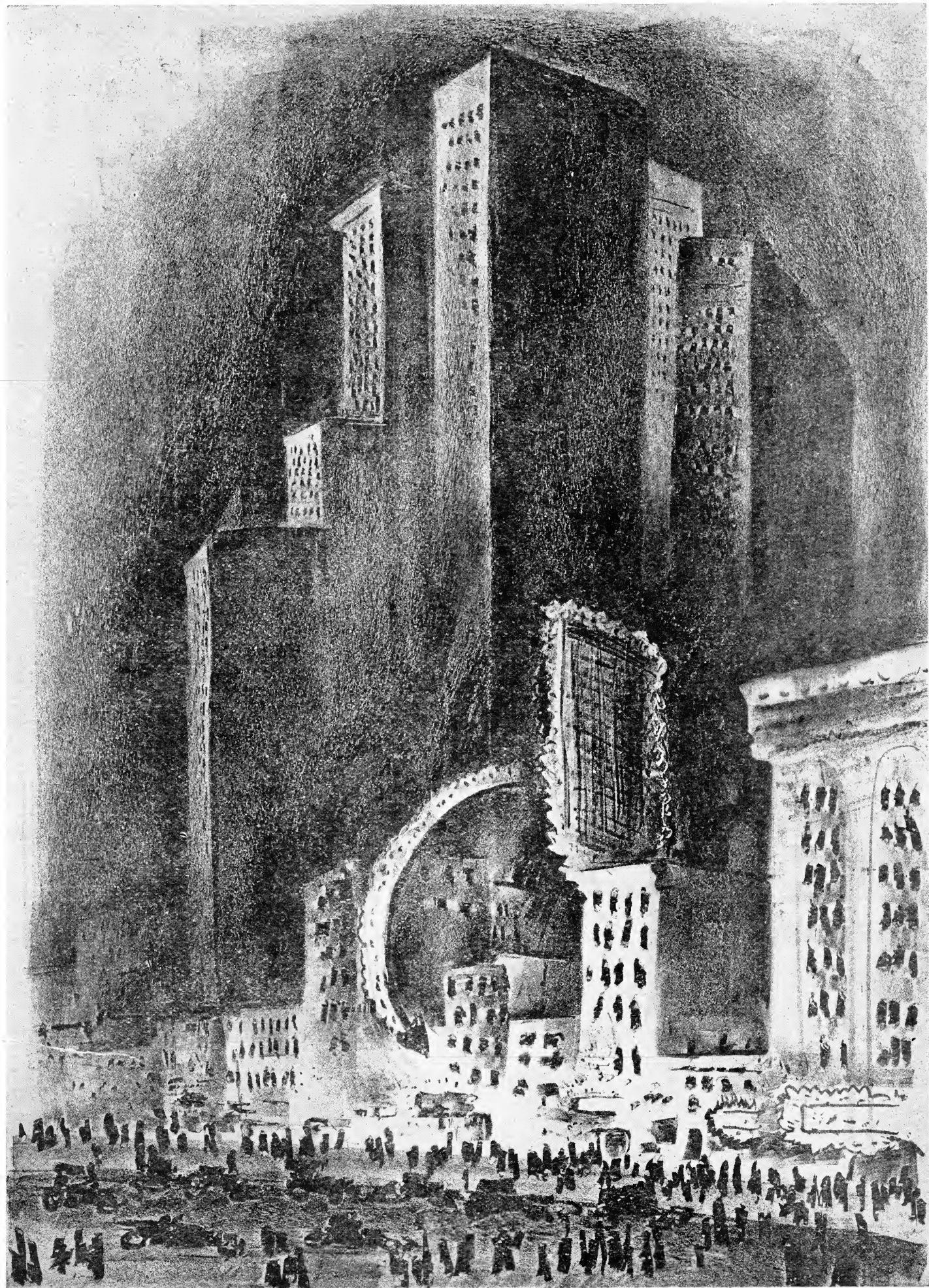
GRACE LUMPKIN.



No Job—Spring, 1930.

—Lithograph by Louis Lozowick

Louis Lozowick



New York Night —Lithograph by Adolph Dehn

E. PHILLIPS RUSSELL

A PARCEL FOR KING SOLOMON

(CHARACTERS)

SOLOMON, King of Israel. (costume—blue green)
AZARIAH, Captain of the Palace Guard. (olive and grey).
JEHOSAPHAT, Chief Recorder. (yellow grey)
EGLAH, a dancing girl. (grey and violet)
Two of Solomon's wives. (one in grey, one in violet)
Page and fan-bearer. (yellow brown)

TIME: An afternoon in mid-summer.

PLACE: Throne room in Solomon's Palace.

SETTING: Throne of Solomon (in gold and ivory) on pyramid of steps down stage at right. Back Centre, the recorder's table under which is a stack of bricks. In wall at left, up stage, an open casement window through which bright light streams. Entrance to room through the terra cotta curtains at extreme left, down stage.

PROPS: Throne, drapery, curtains, pyramid of steps, sword, table, stool, small hammer, chisel, rectangular brickbats, red letter-paper, scroll of paper.

At rise Solomon is disclosed on throne, asleep and snoring, head resting on hand. Crown is hooked on corner of throne for sake of coolness. A young Page is sleepily fanning the sovereign with a long-handled fan of peacock's feathers. Jehosaphat also asleep with head and shoulders resting flat on arms thrown across table. His tenor snore alternates with Solomon's bass.

Bump is heard Off Stage at left and through hangings bursts in Azariah, a sunburnt young man with heavy thatch of coarse black hair. He carries a sword at side and in hand a spear. He passes uncertainly as Solomon and Jehosaphat start up with annoyed expressions.

Solomon: What meaneth this? Is there no rest in Israel, even for the righteous?

Azariah: (Making obeisance) My lord!

Solomon: Who art thou?

Azariah: I am Azariah, O King, Captain of the palace guard, succeeding Zabud, who hath gone to pacify the Hittites. I crave my lord's pardon for waking him at such an hour, but thy servant is but a rough soldier unacquainted with the ceremony of palaces.

Solomon: Was there none to announce thee?

Azariah: All my lord's servants are sunk in sleep, even the Ethiopian at the door. I but gave him a slight push to awake him and thereupon he hath tumbled down the staircase.

Solomon: Well, my captain, what bringeth thee hither at such an hour?

Azariah: O King, I am come to tell thee of the coming of a cargo of gifts for thee from Hiram, King of Tyre.

Solomon: (Showing interest) Oho! A cargo from Hiram? And what doth it consist of?

Azariah: Ivory and apes and peacocks, O King, and a parcel in especial given in charge of the captain of the ship.

Solomon: Well, well; and where be the parcel?

Azariah: Waiting outside thy door, O King.

Solomon: Waiting? What be the nature of this parcel?

Azariah: The parcel consisteth, my lord, of a damsel.

Solomon: (Sitting up) A damsel? Alive?

Azariah: Yea, very much so, O King (Rubs face) She hath sharp finger nails.

Solomon: Let her be brought hither.

(Azariah bows and goes out. Solomon smooths his hair and beard and Jehosaphat runs over to put crown on Solomon's head, adjusting it carefully. Azariah re-enters, bows, takes up position on right of entrance, and grounds spear rigidly.)

Eglah, swathed in olive green and grey clothes, follows him and stands in centre facing Solomon.)

Solomon: (After pause) Thou art she which cometh from Tyre?

Eglah: Yea, O King.

Solomon: And what is thy name?

Eglah: Eglah, my lord.

Solomon: Eglah! A fair name and pleasing. It is Hiram which hath sent thee?

Eglah: Even so, O King. I bear this message written upon red papyrus.

(She takes from around her neck a cord to which a letter is attached. Solomon motions to Jehosaphat, who takes letter from woman and opens it.)

Jehosaphat: (Reading aloud) Hiram saluteth Solomon, son of his well beloved friend David, and sendeth to him for his birthday a ship laden with gifts which he hopeth the King will be pleased to accept. Included therein is the chiefest of Tyrian dancing girls for the pleasure of the King and his entertainment.

Solomon: Hiram was ever a faithful friend. And his gifts are always selected with so much taste. I shall send him a necklace of rubies and a hundred lambs with fat tails. Make thou a note of it, O Jehosaphat.

Jehosaphat: (Scratching) Yea, O King.

Solomon: And now, my daughter, couldst thou be prevailed upon to show us a hint of thy talents. (Woman bows) Music, O Jehosaphat.

(Jehosaphat steps out a moment, claps hands, and returns to seat. As slow Oriental music begins, Woman dances. Dance to last 3 minutes or as required)

Solomon: (As Woman concludes dance and sinks in low obeisance) It is well. Of a surety, Hiram maketh few mistakes. Be at ease my daughter, and let thine heart sing a little song, for it shall be well with thee. (To Azariah) Let her be taken to the apartments of the women where she may be rested and refreshed.

(Azariah bows and escorts Woman out.)

Solomon: Bestir thyself, O Jehosaphat, and take thou a few lines on thy new Babylonish devices.

Jehosaphat: (Plumping on table small hammer, chisel, and bricks) Yea, O King.

Solomon: Art ready?

Jehosaphat: (Poising hammer and chisel over brick held in lap) Yea, my lord.

Solomon: (Clearing throat and casting his eyes up to ceiling in thought, begins to dictate slowly) Fairer was she than any of them which dwelt in the King's palaces. (Jehosaphat hammers brick) She was like unto the young reed which swayeth in the water's edge. (Jehosaphat hammers) Her feet were pink like unto beryl—

Jehosaphat: Pink like what, my lord?

Solomon: Beryl!

Jehosaphat: How doth one spell it, my lord?

Solomon: (Spelling) B. E. Double-R. I. L.—Beryl!

Jehosaphat: What be that, my lord?

Solomon: Child of a pestle-tailed mule! Beryl—the precious stone. (Resuming dictation) Her hair falleth like black waterfalls in the silver valleys. Her eyes were twin pools—

Jehosaphat: Thin pools, my lord?

Solomon: No, twin, thou camel's hump! Twin pools.

Jehosaphat: (Taking another brick) Yea, O King.

Solomon: Her nose—

(Another crash is heard off stage. Enters Azariah, panting and excited).

Azariah: My lord!

Solomon: Well, well, what hath happened now?

Azariah: My lord, the alien woman was a spy!

Solomon: A Spy? What meanest thou?

Azariah: The red letter from Hiram to thee was a forgery, methinks—a trick to gain entrance to thine house-hold. For no sooner was she there than she put a whistle to her lips and blew louder—



Work or Wages!

—Drawn by A. Lebedinsky

ly. It was a signal, of a surety, O King, for at its sound thy wives arose as one and began to pour out into the streets—

Solomon: My wives out in the streets?

Azariah: Yea, O King, marching in procession with banners impudently inscribed.

Solomon: But where wert thou and thy guardmen? Are there no mighty men to deal with foolish women?

Azariah: Yea, O King, we did advance upon them, but they say to us to stand aside or we shall be trodden upon. It is a strike, they cry.

Solomon: A strike?

Azariah: Yea, O King. It seemeth that thy rebellious women ha² already chosen a committee to wait upon thee with certain demands, headed by the strange woman from Tyre.

Solomon: (*Sinks back wearily*) Many are they which have risen up against me. A man may withstand one wife but who shall prevail against 900? I tell thee now and straitly, Jehosaphat, that this be the last harem which I shall ever keep. Peace, peace, I cry, but there is no peace. Better is one rasher of bacon with quietness than roast lamb and peas amidst a banging of doors. It sometimes seemeth to me that I be not fitted to be a ruler over peoples and an inhabitant of crowded palaces. Rather would I choose to dwell in a forest hut, there to write my songs by the side of shaded brooks. My father, David, could smite an enemy with one hand and write psalms with the other. But I, I am not so. My soul abhorreth all manner of strife. My position compelleth me to make a certain amount of display, but my tastes are in truth quite simple. Only yester-evening, while taking my usual stroll beneath the plane trees, alone—except for a councillor of state, a fan-bearer, a purse-bearer, two camel officers, four spear-

men and a couple of eunuchs—I beheld a young man taken in charge by the night guard. I enquired and learned that it was for a theft of blooms from the palace grounds. I had him fetched to me. On my asking his occupation, he answereth sturdily that he was a poet. "O youth," saith I, "for whom intendeſt thou thy garland of illicit flowers?" "For one whom I love," saith he. "Unhand him," saith I, "give back to him his nosegay, and bestow upon him a double handful of gold and silver pieces." Believeſt thou me, Jehosaphat, I would rather choose to live as that youth on chick peas and a morsel of goat's cheese in a cave among yon hillside's rocks, than to be lord of all the countries that border the Tyrrhenian Sea. Nevertheless, despite all my difficulties, I myself can still turn out a quatrain now and then. Listen thou to this—(*Pulls out scroll from sleeve*). I wrote it during the fifth month agone, and it still soundeth good.

Jehosaphat: Yea, my lord, but I—

Solomon: It will take but a moment. Instruct thou the musicians to play a soft appealing melody.

(*Jehosaphat goes out and returns. Orchestra strikes up a jazzy melody*).

Solomon: Nay, flathead. Speak thou to the chief musician and say that if he playeth that thing again in my hearing, his head shall be cut off close behind his ears.

(*Jehosaphat goes out. Music ceases and then begins a slow Oriental strain—something by Tchaikovsky or Cesar Cui. Jehosaphat returns*).

There, that be something like it. Just listen to this, wilt thou? (*Recites from scroll*) Down cometh the long, long rain. Yea, the rain is long. But not so long as the hours, the hours I wait for thee. (*Tapping scroll*) That be poetry, Jehosaphat, my son! Original too! So far as I know, I was the first to introduce a turtle, for example, into modern poetry. They speak much in the parlors of nature-poets. Why I can write rings around them with my left hand.

Azariah: I doubt it not, O King.

Solomon: But where be these daughters of the horse-leech, O Azariah?

Solomon: This also is vanity and vexation of spirit. Let them be brought hither.

(*Azariah bows and goes out*)

What sayeth thou, Jehosaphat, to acting as regent in my stead for a time, whilst I go into a far country to finish my book of proverbs?

Jehosaphat: Not thy servant, my lord, not thy servant!

Solomon: My book of proverbs—there is my life-work, Jehosaphat! Solomon, King of Israel, will all too soon sleep with his fathers and the glories of his court will be forgotten; dogs and jackals will one day howl amid the prostrate columns of my finest palaces; Jerusalem itself may fall and red-faced Gentiles come and eat hard-boiled eggs among its ruins; our people may be scattered to the earth's four corners and Israel's princes may become despised traders and hawkers at the back doors of swine-eating goyim, but my proverbs—they shall live!

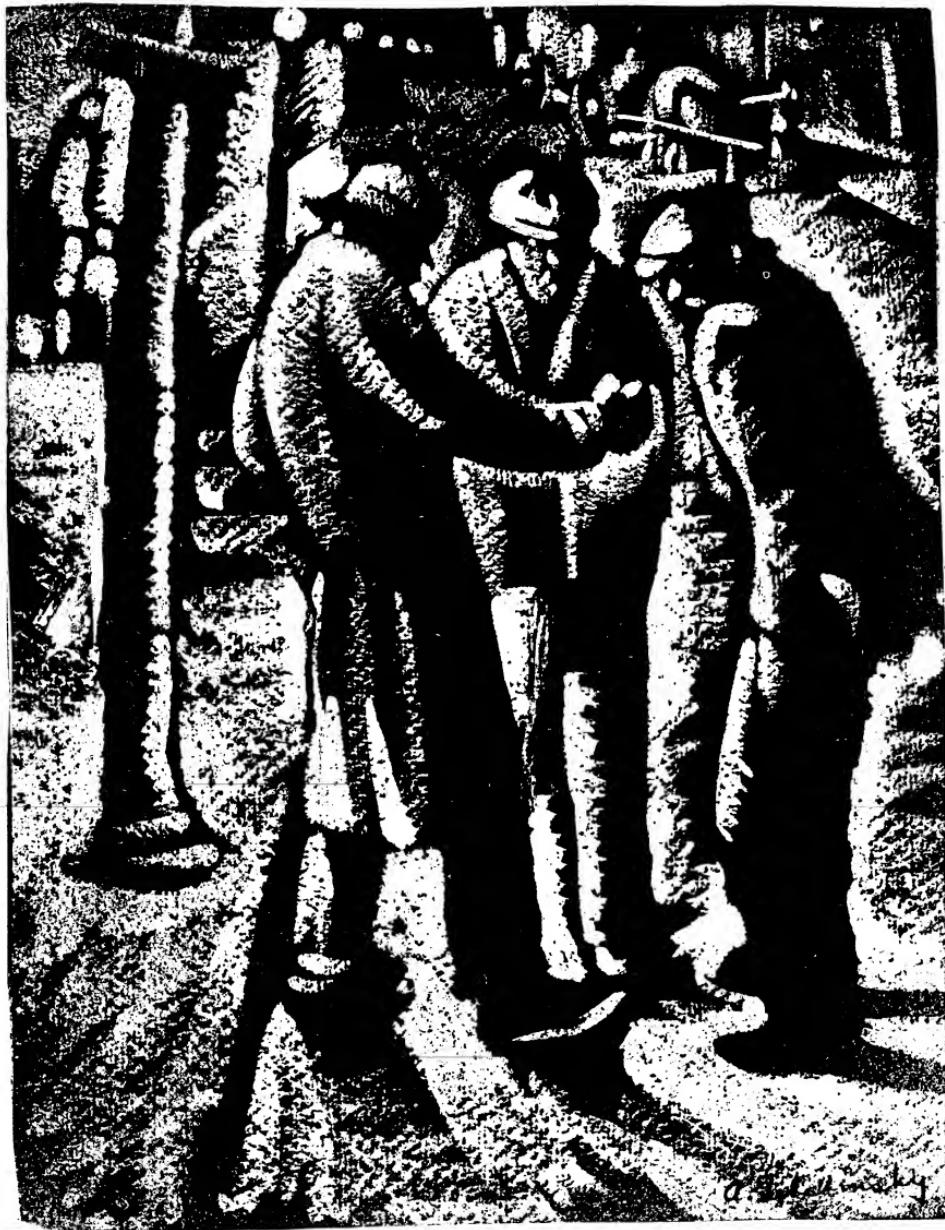
Jehosaphat: (*Repressing yawn*) Yea, my lord. Thy servant is sure of it.

Solomon: Know, O Jehosaphat, that in my proverbs I have created a new literary form. In them I am packing like meat in a beechnut everything that I have seen, observed and experienced as a crown prince, as a King, and as a—as a—well, call it a man about town. A thousand years from now, in cities built on sites where today there are but barbarous forests, people will be quoting me and saying, There was a man who could write.

Jehosaphat: Yea, O King, thy servant believeth it; but meantime there be people here who—

Solomon: My book shall contain at least 5,000 proverbs, pithy sayings and smart epigrams. So far I have ticked off 3,827. But think you I am allowed the time to write the other eleven hundred and seventy-three? Nay, the moment I take up my papyrus word cometh to me that the Queen of Sheba approacheth across the desert with a calvacade designed to put my own processions

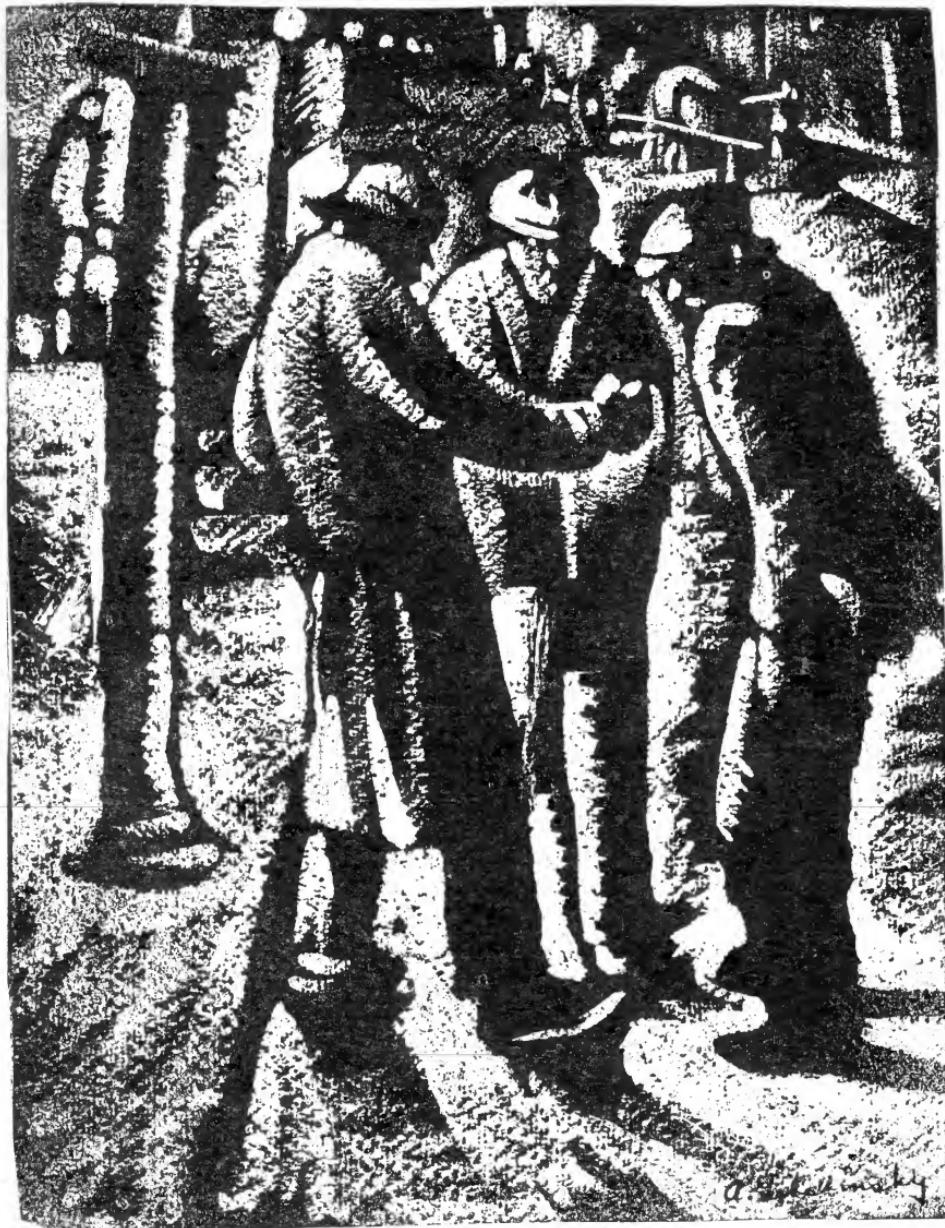
MAY, 1930



Work or Wages!

—Drawn by A. Lebedinsky

MAY, 1930



Work or Wages!

—Drawn by A. Lebedinsky

in the shade, and I perforce must stop and put on a show that will knock her eyes out, just to reveal to her that there be life in the old showman yet. Or a deputation from the Temple Porch Business Men's Association butteth in to complain of the competition from Bedouin peddlers. Or the artificers of ear-rings send their chief to request the imposition of a tariff, and the dyers of purple follow with a demand to take it off.

Jehosaphat: B-but if the King please, what shall I say to these—

Solomon: (*Wearily*) Yea, yea, the Committee! Oh well, let them enter! Let them enter!

(*Jehosaphat signals and Committee of 3 women enters with rhythmic stride in Egyptian file to sound of trumpet off stage. They are escorted by Azariah with sword drawn. He marshals them before the throne, makes them bow deeply, and then stands at attention in rear*)

Solomon: (*Gazing over women's heads.*) If thou hast aught to say, say on.

Eglah: (*Steps forward C. draws a scroll from her bosom, reads.*) Wilt thou send by a sure hand and without delay one-half pound of nard perfumed as before and—

First Woman: (*In panic.*) My love, thou art reading from the wrong side.

Eglah: Oh! (*Reverses scroll hastily, clears throat, and reads*) If it please our lord the King, the aggrieved women of the King's household, having appointed thy servant as spokesman, crave leave to present the following demands:

First, that the present system of oppression and espionage through black Ethiopians be abolished.

Second, that on two afternoons of each week thy wives and maid-servants may be permitted to visit the bazaars in the city, to receive friends in their chambers, and to read the romances of the great scribes without let or hindrance.

Third, that dancing girls and tire women be not summoned without at least a half hour's notice before the fifth hour of the afternoon or the second hour of the morning.

Fourth, that hot water be distributed throughout the women's apartments twice each day, morning and evening, instead of the morning only, as at present; and that the vessels be twice the size of those wont be used.

Fifth, that their children be no longer called by various numbers as at present, but shall be given a proper name at birth.

Solomon: Art finished?

(*Eglah bows*)

First Wife: (*To Eglah*) Nay, nay, that be only the half. There was another scroll to be read.

Eglah: Sayest thou so? But only the one was given to me.

Second Wife: There were in truth two scrolls. Where be the second one?

Eglah: I know not. I be a stranger here.

First Wife: Yea, but thou wert the chairman at the meeting.

Second Wife: Something hath told me something would go wrong.

First Wife: Whom dost thou seek to blame?

Solomon: Enough, enough! Let there be no civil wars begun in the chief palace... These demands, in truth, are reasonable. Why have they not been brought to me ere now?

Eglah: There be too many chamberlains, guards, soldiers, servants and attendants between his wives and the King.

Solomon: Say thou to all the women of the household that all their requests shall be and are granted. Go now and let there be peace.

Eglah: (*raising hands*) Great is Solomon, King of Israel.

Second Woman: (*also*) There is none like unto him.

Third Woman: (*also*) His wisdom shall be established forever.

(*All three make low obeisance, to which Solomon responds. They turn to go out, but just before the parted curtain drops behind Eglah, Solomon motions to her and Jehosaphat springs up to detain her.*)

Solomon: Stay! (*Eglah turns and comes back to the Centre, facing Solomon.*) From whence comest thou?

Eglah: I be a woman of the Hittites, my lord.

Solomon: Thy father, does he still live?

Eglah: Nay, my lord. Under captivity his spirit brake, for he was a King.

Solomon: Thou comest, then, of a people accustomed to rule?

Eglah: Yea, my lord.

Solomon: Then come hither.

(*She approaches the throne and stops, but Solomon rises and draws her by the hand up to his side. He motions her to be seated on the throne and as she does so gingerly, Solomon quickly takes the crown from his head and places it on hers. He then bows low, and turns to Jehosaphat.*)

Solomon: And now be quick, O Jehosaphat, and procure for me a saddled horse and a fast one. My soul longeth for the tall cedars of Lebanon.

(*He dodges behind the curtains and all follow him out, leaving Eglah alone on the throne.*)

CURTAIN

PATRON OF LETTERS

*Sir, you have dined me well . . . the check
Is yours to pay, of course—I know it means
So little to a man like you. Remember well
I did not ask it; no, when you unlocked
The gate into the pasture that you keep
Green for the starvelings of the herd, I felt
No duty, no, not even the right to say
“Caveat Emptor—I am not the thing
You think me.” After all, you too must take
Your chances in a world of sheep and wolves.*

*Waiter, the check! I'm sorry, old man, see
The bill is larger than you thought. For I
Hunt too, and I must have a certain fee
Of flesh from you. It is not right, of course;
Nothing is right. I have my way of life
As you have yours. Indeed, I find it strange
How little pity I can feel for you,
Whose luxury is pity, you whose pride
Is lavishness: “Poor Hank, poor Jane, I kept
Her going for a while; she didn't do
Much work, of course; answered the telephone.
I paid her something, and she wrote that spring
Her “Modern Naiad's Diary” and the first
Madonna sequence in her book; her Hank's
A pest—I guess I know. Good Lord, the night
He made us listen while he read the script
Of “Man-Trap”—poor old Tom O'Hara passed
Away completely; you know Tom—He lived
That summer in the shack above the hill
Swilling my booze—I didn't try to stop
Him—what's the use? He used to cry and say
I wasn't doing right by his poor Jane . . .
His Jane! Oh Lord, the arguments that he
And Hank would have when both of them were drunk
As sailors—poor old Tom . . . ”*

*I wonder what
Hookworm devours you that you need so fat
A diet of contempt? Why are your eyes
So restless? Why should every pitying word
Be like a daub of offal on the names
You chatter so—what imp of failure gnaws
Your entrails that you pack your emptiness
With all the sodden derelicts that roam
The seven seas of art? . . .*

*Pity? There is
More pity in the winter sea that took
Tom's final courage as a fair, clean gift
That balanced everything. Yes, even you
I know were stung by that last victory.
Something escaped you. Something always will.
Tom cheated you, and so, I think, will all
The others, for not one of them but has
Less need of you than you have need of—what?
Something, I think, you would not dare to name
Something unbought in spite of all the gold
You've freely spent to string your life with kind
Deeds to the humble, as a prosperous drab
Strings bracelets on her arms . . .*

JAMES RORTY.



The Slave Market—Sixth Avenue, New York. — Drawn by Wm. Gropper.

ED FALKOWSKI

THE STEEL MILL

1. THE FLAME ETERNAL.

The Ruhr skies are restless with the quivering dance of fires that warm up the cold night with a ruddy glow. The stars seem ashen cinders flying through the waves of flame that toss themselves against the heavens. Daylight reduces these fires to writhing yellow husks of heat, with tassels of smoke. It is the darkness that brings out the weird beauty of the torches—everlasting fires of steel mills.

Year in, year out, the flames dance on. They are as permanent as the mills which brood in a surly immortality of smoke and dust. The fires throw paths of scarlet across the Ruhr, across the Rhine. Rebellious flames seeking release, like the thousands of slaves closed within those dingy walls whose only escape lies in the dream of final rebellion.

When once the Ruhr nightskies are unlighted by these torches, you may be sure something momentous is afoot. A revolution, a catastrophe, a world being shattered. They went dark during the Kapp Putsch. When the tremendous lockout took place in November, 1928, again the heavens were black—a sign that the ovens were cold. And steel ovens dare not get cold except when they must—

These are flamy banners announcing the stability of a capitalist universe.

But the flames have already gone out a few times. They may even go out once more. For history has not yet reached its last chapter.

11. A SONGLESS OCCUPATION.

There is something time-clocky about the steel mill. Everything moves strictly to minute. Two buckets of coke, and one of ore make a "tour," and 32 tours make a shift. Every two and one half hours the ores are cooked and are now ready to gush down into waiting sandforms. Between the tappings is barely enough time to shape things for the next gush—if you hurry. There is no comradeship, no time for the men to drink coffee together, and talk over things as men do in the mines, or at sea.

Men accept one another as one prisoner may greet another—with no words, but plenty of understanding. But words have their place in life. The dramatic curses of miners—crisp snapshots of smothered discontent—the big-chested songs of Kumpels singing of sex and rebellion, with weepy, beer-soaked ballads thrown between for good measure—the gusty, hearty friendship of Kumpel for Kumpel, born of a pit where danger welds men of opposite temperaments into common loyalty—this, the steel worker lacks.

The steel worker lacks the dark dangers that haunt the coal pit. The silences, the pauses compelled by exhaustion, the bread and coffee pause, these things do not cross the steel worker's eight hours of exerting toil.

His face is softer, as though melted down by the furious heat.



—Drawn by Jan Matulka

It suggests patience, holding out against the clock, rather than dangers defied, and overcome.

The German miner has a background of tradition and balladry. It is true that the dignity of his trade has gone the way of rationalized things, that today he is a serf belonging to the pit, and his dangerous profession has the mark of public contempt upon it. It is the "last trade," in the eyes of the community. The dirtiest, meanest, cheapest,—something one instinctively reserves for the "foreigner."

But the songs survive, and the miner out on a payday spree, still voices the heroics of his trade in a manly brawl. Some glamor still clings to his trade. For him the poetry of the pit is not altogether dead.

But the steel worker never had any songs to sing. Maybe because his trade is comparatively speaking, too modern, and workers have lost the habit of timing their work to the beats of song. The timeclock has replaced the balladry of the days of slower pace; it has robbed men of companionship at work. . . .

Only the hiss of gas, the drone of huge motors, the hum of electricity streaming through heavy-laden wires, the pop of the furnace as it is tapped, and the flood of hot gold bursting in a tearing, irresistible tide, hissing, roaring, sputtering,—this is the only song the steel worker knows.

III THE UNBUTTERED SIDE.

The shadows of the lords of steel move across the industry with the ironic fatality of the machines themselves. In Germany, the metal industry suffers more lockouts than strikes, and more layoffs than days off.

Long rows of grim, smoky houses in crestfallen alleys throw a wall around the misery of the workers. Oberhausen, Duisburg, Dusseldorf, Bochum, the great steel cities of the Ruhr submerge the toilers in weary, sunless lanes, not included in Baedeker!

It is a heartless struggle between semistarvation at work, and practically the same fate when a jobless season comes around, and one's face haunts the windows of welfare offices.

Sudden cuts in the "bonus," reductions of the force, compulsory holidays, or complete shutdowns thrill the steel worker's life with unexpected happenings. Small plant meetings are held, many fiery things are uttered, but what is done remains done. The gods ask no questions, consider no demands. Theirs is the last authority, and they have spoken.

Margarine, the "proletarian butter," and barley coffee repeat themselves at each mealtime with tireless monotony. Horsemeat is often resorted to because of its cheapness. Fruit, and the finer temptations to which even the appetite of a worker is sometimes susceptible, fly from the table to the paradise of apparently unbought edibles which grace the windows of fine food shops along the main street.

On top of that the grinding monotony of a job whose leading excitement is putting the hours in. A clock-watching job, with everything occurring on schedule, that you could set your watch by observing the operations of the worker at any given moment. No Sundays, no holidays. . . except when inflicted. . . .

Nor does the steel worker want a Sunday off. Sunday means 50% extra. Holidays mean more money. He has lost the sense of freedom, of strolling in the country, or visiting a theatre or concert. He becomes a toneless work-animal, with all the finer senses dead within him, with no further desire stirring him than to get the shift in, and tomorrow it will be the same all over again.

But perhaps there is something deep inside the steel worker yet unkillable by the days that rotate like wheels crushing him under their rims . . . a fire that will one day burst out like hot steel from the oven that flames inside of him, sending a mountainous proclamation of fire over the world, that the steel slave claims his freedom at last . . . and when hot steel bursts from the pot, there is nothing can stand in its way. . . .

Berlin, Germany.



—Drawn by Jan Matulka



No More War—'Till the Next War

—Drawn by I. Klein

THE OLD AND THE NEW

By HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

The third period of the Soviet kino begins! The first period, still persisting in occasional films, is the period of *Polikushka*, the plight of the individual; the second period which will recur in the third, is the period of *Potemkin* to *Storm Over Asia*, the period of the physical and the retrospective. The vigor of this second period endows the film of the third with essential health. Into this sound body, upon its firm strength, is built the new kino of reflection and prospect, education toward the future.

The film which proclaims this new era is *The Old and The New*, (*The General Line*), the General Peasant Policy tract by Eisenstein. Yes, a tract—upon tractors. Eisenstein was confronted with a problem which differed entirely from the compact moment of *Potemkin* or the historical canvas of *Ten Days*. He was to make a piece of social agitation that would stimulate to action and that would be informative of what the new collective peasantry would gain by rejecting individualism.

He was talking to a people of simple and immediate motivations, of not fully criticized suspicions and of certain precise experiences. He was giving them also a moving picture and they, of simple backgrounds, would want a picture that entertained with folk-simple drama. Their logic was a narrative logic, an elementary sequential logic of ideas expressed in a logic of images. Eisenstein's intention was to produce by this expression of ideas in images a logic of dialectics: *The Old and The New!* This film is a first statement of the endeavor to bring the philosophic element into the cinema, an endeavor Eisenstein promises to realize fully in his rendering of Marx's *Capital*.

The problem: an educational end, an agitational conviction, a simple narrative, a folk mood . . . to be made into a film. How was it done?

Thus: the philosophy, or ideological intention, is not kept a thing apart, but converted into the persuasive, folk narrative. Once having recognized and established the problem, the director determined upon a structure. It is the structural soundness and variety of *The Old and The New* that makes it a film superior to *A Fragment of an Empire*, which has the elements of the Eisenstein film but lacks its structural rhythmic coordination.

Machinery and the bull-progenitor are the impetus of the film. They are the subject's concentration-points and the film's pivots. How immediately Eisenstein transmits the problems to the peasants! In their terms, in their experience.

The bull is to be wedded to the heifer. This is the splendid ritual of earth. The community garlands the bride and Fomka, the groom. The guests wear garlands. And the black kitten, the bridesmaid, wears too a wreath. The marriage is fulfilled.

MOVIES

The record on the screen is masterly in camera-alertness and impact-mounting. The gaiety of the preliminaries moves leisurely to a fierce accumulation in the rush of the bull and the cow rearing to receive him.

But the kulak bribes peasant stool-pigeons to poison Fomka. Gloom, despair weigh upon the community. Martha Lapkina, the film's bright-eyed symbol of the collective, falls upon the black earth weeping the death of Fomka. The calf nestles to her: he is hope!

The peasants have just participated in an ignominious religious ritual, from which they have arisen to suspect the priest. From

this agitation to the agitation of the agricultural director they go, suspicious of all that distance, heaven or Moscow, sends. Heaven sent a black-frocked priest and a humiliating ritual. Moscow sends a talkative man and—a suspicious milk-separator. The milk-separator invites, however, curiosity as well as suspicion, and when its entrails move, its udders pour—*Abundance!* Martha bathes in the benediction of *Milk*. The clouds burst and pour *Milk!* Eisenstein repeats in the suspensive and glorious movement of the separator's mechanism the success of the Potemkin's getting underway. But here it has more than a moment's meaning: it is the future, the new world.

A tractor is bought. Eisenstein does not spare a third enemy of the people—kulak, priest, bureaucrat—the clerk who holds his soul together with red-tape. But he gets back as soon as he can to the tractor.

The operator of the tractor has dressed himself in an aviator's helmet, goggles, wind-breakers, celluloid collar and ties askew. But tractors are run otherwise. The peasants, their doubt substantiated, return to the hut and the horse. Martha stands by. The chauffeur removes his coat, his hat, his goggles; he is in shirt-sleeves, under the tractor. The trouble is discovered. He needs a cloth. Rip goes Martha's skirt. She submits laughing, masking her eyes for modesty. Virginal Martha, fecund Martha! The tractor moves and Martha rides with the engineer. Hoo-rah! a line of trucks is tied onto the monster. The peasants leap upon their steeds, and the procession winds over the furrows. ALL RUS-SIA IS TRACTOR-BLOSSOMING!

This film is a film of wit, folk-humor, shrewdness, optimism, clarity and point, ingenuity, a structurally harmonized duality of viewpoint: of the objective builder and thinker, and of the narrative. It forestalls the objection of two different approaches by its integration of the two toward a single end: COLLECTIVISM! *The Old and The New* is of greatest importance to the future, not only of the Russian film, but of the world's cinema. It proclaims the period of reflection and prospect in the Soviet kino, and enters, as a contributor, the evolving era of the cinema of the world, the cinema of contemplation and inference.

A TRADESMAN EXPATIATES

*it is a known fact,
portended the eloquent degeneration from brave
and spanish stock (they live on the corn of the land)
this place is BIG.
even the best people come here now,
rich guys from new york,
and roads and property . . . these artists
sell the country, and tho I kno
and doubt if others tell
one picture from another:
postcard picture tourists fall all over themselves,
giving the boys a hand.*

NORMAN MACLEOD

MAY, 1930



No More War—'Till the Next War

—Drawn by I. Klein

this agitation to the
go, suspicious of all
Heaven sent a black

BOOKS

Margaret Larkin
Ralph Cheyney
Joseph Kalar

REVIEWED BY:
Charles Yale Harrison

E. Merrill Root
Kenneth Fearing
J. Q. Neets

The Revolt of the Fishermen, by Anna Seghers, Longmans, Green & Co. \$2.00.

Throughout this book, night seems to prevail, a dumb darkness in which people move numbly, weighed down by hunger and a leaden despair. Wives of fishermen give birth to children knowing that they cannot live: children bloom in the rancid cancerous shacks like sickly weeds, knowing hunger only. This hunger "Clutched at one first here and then there, it stuck in one's head and sucked hopping, merry hunger-thoughts out of one's mind, then it clutched one's heart and made it burn and beat, then it seemed to permeate one's hands making them soft like butter, and then again it swept between one's legs into one's loins." Every day for weeks, Kedennek's wife says—"that is all we can have to eat, I've planned everything: the fat and the beans, so that there will be enough left for the winter. The children looked at their mother; Kedennek stared straight in front of him with a fixed, hard look which seemed to go right through all the silly things that were planted about him when he was on land: four walls, a pregnant woman, and beans and children and hunger." Hunger is the dominating note of the book and under its remorseless compulsion, fishermen become a little less than men.

There are no heroes in this book: individuals detach themselves from the mass only for emphasis of the mass, this is a book of man in the mass. Only Hull, the agitator, is an alien for a brief time, then he too becomes one of the mass. Hull comes to the fishermen calling upon them to revolt, fishermen become men, blank listless eyes light up with a fire of hope. But even their revolt is leaden in its savagery, blind, dogged, and sullen. Their numbness is almost unreal. An Andreas becomes a flame in the dark; a Kedennek walks stonily into the bullets of the soldiers; Mary the prostitute is raped by the soldiers, but refuses to reveal the hiding place of Andreas who has scuttled a ship that was about to break the pledge of the fishermen not to leave without new agreements; Hull, the agitator, leaves to save his skin, to see women, land, new people, but an irresistible compulsion makes him return, and he is arrested. A man, a woman, stands out from the mass for a moment, but we see that it is really the mass-man standing forth, that each individual but accentuates the parts out of which the mass-man is made.

The strike is lost. Men return dumbly to their work and their ships, it is late, ships from other towns have taken the best fishing-places by this time. The book ends on a note of futility and mysticism: the men return almost too easily into that dark listless void that was their slavery, and the implications are that Fate is at the bottom of everything.

The Revolt of the Fishermen is a strange, beautifully written book, compelling, terrible even in its colors of poverty.

* JOSEPH KALAR.

Poems in the Passing Show

Manhattan Made: Poems by Charles Recht. Horace Liveright. \$2.00

As a poet, Recht is an excellent novelist. Significantly, Lewishohn and Mencken confess on the jacket that they usually don't like poetry and then praise these in the book. Many passages are damn good prose—incisive, full of the jerky movement and shattered color of 1930 life and the mixed moods of the muddling middle class. His subtly smashing "Rue With a Difference" proved

his quick eye and pen. But to write real poems you need several things Recht lacks, besides knowledge of how to write poetry, and that his restless preoccupation with surfaces and immediacies may prevent. Among others, passion and prophecy.

At best, Recht sings through his nose, and the performance is impaired by the fact that he is much more interested in thumbing that organ at the passing show. The one place he comes near achieving poetry is the one place he takes inspiration from Revolutionary Labor, "Pattern for a Russian Towel."

RALPH CHEYNEY.

Three-Fifths of New York

Pay Day, by Nathan Asch. Brewer & Warren. \$2.50.

Pay Day certainly has the virtue of a blurted frankness. There is scarcely a crude day-dreaming imagination about the anatomy of sex, scarcely an ingrown longing for libidinous orgies, scarcely a sick desire of impotence for unlimited indulgence, scarcely a peering nastiness of thwarted youth, that is not at least suggested here. In justice, one must add that the author himself does not write with the morbid curiosity of the sexually perverted, but with the detached scientific irony of the medical bystander—it is all very sick and sad to him, and he stands above the patient like a doctor above a man with gangrene. The thousands who read the book, however, read it not for this detached irony, but to wallow in the direct prurience.

The publisher's blurb asserts that this clerk's life is "The life of three fifths of New York." Apparently, then, New York is largely composed of pimply clerks whose vocabulary overworks the word "hell," who long to embrace as soon as possible every girl they see on the subway, who can't keep a resolve five minutes or twenty dollars overnight, who are too impotent to accept sexual satisfaction when it is thrust upon them . . . The "greatest city in the world" is a sink of amorphous weakness, where the day-dreams are very nasty and the activities very tame and dull. One's general impression is a staccato nightmare of sick jellyfish, a Limbo of nausea. If that is New York—and it may be, for all I know—one can visualize the Patagonian sitting on the ruins of Brooklyn Bridge. And one can only urge the earthquake: "Come quickly!"

Several things explain this sort of book: The example of the amoeba-genius of Joyce: our modern overemphasis on the substrata and primitive bases of consciousness: our superstition that only the cruder levels of life are "real": our aesthetic behaviourism: and (we must admit) the cagings and thwartings of a "civilization" that takes us away from the green earth and the sanity of life in tune with instinct, to make us cogs in a machine and ants in a heap. On the whole, the book is (philosophically) propaganda for futility; and (artistically) the most fashionable form of contemporary melodrama.

"Jim's nature was not big, his emotions were not deep, but this only intensifies his story for the reader." So the publishers tell us. And the poor Jims of the world, the caged and thwarted and impotent, the stewing millions who like to feel that their poor little buried nastiness is really important, the psychopathic driftwood of this age of terrible transition who long to have their littleness lifted into the light and held up as significant, will call it "truth" and "realism" and "literature." That, as Corporal Nym would say, is the humor of it!

E. MERRILL ROOT.

J. Q. NEEDS

UPTON SINCLAIR and THORNTON WILDER

Mountain City. By Upton Sinclair. Albert and Charles Boni. \$2.50
The Woman of Andros. By Thornton Wilder. Albert and Charles Boni. \$2.50.

Upton's Sinclair's *Mountain City* is a satire on our national "work or win" maxim, an indictment of our American "go-getter" hero. Jed Rusher, the central character, is a poor boy who learns early in life "that for the next world you do what the preacher says, while for this world you keep your eye on the banker and the boss." Having mastered this double lesson, Jed proceeds to make his way in the world. Through hypocrisy and cunning, through flattery, lies, and cruelty, this determined youth acquires an education, achieves colossal economic success, marries a wealthy young heiress (by "generously" taking the blame for the young lady's pregnancy), becomes a pillar of respectable society, and, as his final act of grace, donates fifty thousand dollars to his alma mater "for the purpose of maintaining a chair to combat single tax and other economic fallacies."

Parallel to the rise of Jed Rusher, the author traces the decline of the older generation of raucous, brutal, but, for all that, heroic pioneers of early American industrialism. He shows us how our first crop of industrial magnates, those "who had fought the battles and crashed their way to fortune," had passed on "only to be replaced by sons and grandsons who had led easy lives, had been to college and played around and had never been put to the test of a real battle, that would try them to the utmost and develop wind and staying power." As we plod through this lengthy narrative, we come to know something about our leisure class, our hereditary aristocracy—those impractical ne'er-do-wells who "don't know what to do with so much money" and who "haven't the brains to handle it," the softies who have tasted of everything and who now wish "to live simply in a little villa abroad," preferably on the Mediterranean, and there "to write poetry." Though the author does not bring it out clearly, we nevertheless gather that the present scions of the once mighty race have been hard hit by "culture." Bohemians, roués, skeptics, globe-trotters, pessimists, poetasters, and, of late, despairing "new humanists", they are a feeble lot, a decaying brood. Many of them are charming, suave, mellow, but, to borrow from Mike Gold's poetic characterization of Thornton Wilder, "sure to stink if exposed to sunlight."

The Mediterranean and Wilder remind me that my reviewing assignment includes also Wilder's *The Woman of Andros*. Bidding a hasty farewell, therefore, to the tawdry American contemporaneity, we transport ourselves on the gentle, humanist wings of Wilder to the remote pre-Christian era, describing in *The Woman of Andros*, the period when "triumph had passed from Greece and wisdom from Egypt," but when "the land that was soon to be called Holy was already preparing in the dark its wonderful burden." Bidding farewell to the oily business of Jed Rusher and the ugly provincialism of *Mountain City* let us seek refuge in the soft twilight and classic beauties of ancient Hellas. Let us forget the "vain", the "empty", the "transitory", let us cease worrying our heads about science, war, revolution, unemployment, imperialism, class struggle and similar ephemera; let us brood instead over the ageless human problems of love and death. Let us escape this world of flux and corruption and seek solace in the bosom of Christ, in the Holy Church, in the deathless repository of deathless values. Yea, let us go abroad to a quiet little villa on the Mediterranean and write poetry, sonorous invocations to permanence and stability.

It is not difficult to follow Wilder. There is seductiveness in his pallid beauty. The novel has perfect structure, impeccable delineation of plot and character, subtle nuances of meanings, and rhythms, and colors. The story is pervaded with a feeling of nostalgia, a mystic yearning, a clairvoyant probing into the underground labyrinths of the human soul. *The Woman of Andros* is genuine art. It is a perfect expression of a well-defined social trend. It is humanism par excellence.

Dismissing Wilder's ideology as utterly reactionary, we nevertheless can not help admiring his superb structure, his economy

of means, his chrysaline style. We too need literary craftsmanship, technique. From the point of view of literary craftsmanship *The Woman of Andros* gave me infinitely greater pleasure than *Mountain City*. That is why I cannot agree with Mike Gold's sneering remarks about Wilder's "flawless rhetoric" and "perfect English." Perfect English is not such a bad thing. Some day we too will learn to prize it. Why object to a subtle use of words, to a splendidly organized prose? Are we forever doomed to relish the flat, grey, soporific stuff dished out to us by so many of our writers? Nothing, I maintain, is too good for us. Proletarian builders do not reject the industrial technique evolved by a Ford, they adopt it. A magnificent sky-scraper created for a capitalist consumer by a bourgeois architect, is still a magnificent sky-scraper, and may serve as a model for a magnificent worker's palace. A wise proletarian does not pooh-pooh the very real technical achievement of the bourgeois writer. He attempts first to master it, and then to transcend it. Pushkin and Tolstoy were aristocrats who used "flawless rhetoric" and "perfect" Russian, yet never have they been read with such avidity and studied with such thoroughness as they are now being read and studied by the proletarian writers in Soviet Russia. We must learn from the bourgeoisie just as the bourgeoisie had once learned from the aristocracy.

As regards Sinclair I regret to say that despite my deep gratitude to him for many things he had once taught me about America, his present novel has left me absolutely cold. Neither in content nor in form is it calculated, I feel, to meet the needs of the vanguard of the proletarian movement. His technique is obsolete. His somewhat obvious satire would make excellent pabulum for the more naive members of the Socialist Party and the American Federation of Labor. The class-conscious, revolutionary workers hardly need to be told about the dastardly methods in which capitalistic fortunes are made; they know all about it. What we need is real revolutionary content. What we demand of our artist is not photography, not reporting—this we leave to our journalists—what we demand is fire, imagination, pathos. Instead of Sinclair's drab prose and two-dimensional characters, we need glowing words, and penetrating psychological illumination. Our beauty is the beauty of the strong. Accordingly, our art must be swift, dynamic, colorful.

Cowboy Harris

My Reminiscences as a Cowboy, by Frank Harris. Illustrations by Wm. Gropper. Albert & Charles Boni (Paper Books). \$0.75.

"I jumped in the saddle and grabbed aholt the horn,
 I'm the best damn cowpuncher ever was born."

—Cowboy ballad.

The cowboy, as a man action, can perhaps be pardoned for occasional tall tales of his profession. When Frank Harris writes, "it was 135 degrees in the sun" he must be excused for the dramatic addition of ten degrees or so to the climate of Albuquerque; it makes a better story. And if all his adventures, as he reminisces about them, are ten degrees too hot when seen through his bemused memory, one must ascribe it to the literary taste of the cowboy of fifty years ago. All the old timers tell stories that way; if they didn't, what would become of the glamor of the West?

And it's all there. The not very funny jokes of the cow camps; the tenderfoot's adoration of the local bad man; the truly noble character of the bad man ("He stole from the rich and he gave to the poor"); the wild, heroic dash for 'the troops' to rescue the marauding white man from the marauding Indian; the death of the old timer's West.

In a somewhat apologetic introduction, Horace Kallen states that Mr. Harris has three heroes, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Will Bill Hickok. The book fails to reveal them; as usual the real hero of a Frank Harris book is Frank Harris. Wild Bill

Hickok was a dead shot, but in spite of bad eye-sight, Cowboy Harris learned to sight through glasses and then shoot, almost, if not quite as well, as the bad man himself. And what a daring fellow he was!

Frank Harris being something more than an ordinary cow-hand, being a noted man of letters, and a worldly fellow, in fact, it seems a pity that he subscribes to all the prejudices, meanness, and callousness of the pioneer, as well as to his intrepidity. Not only does he confess to having "rustled" cattle, killing a couple of Mex's in the exploit, but he justifies it by assuming that since the victims were only dirty Greasers, everybody ought to think it a prank, as he does. The Mexican never gets a break from Mr. Harris. He adopted the easy pioneer fashion of despising the conquered race, and apparently never revised it, in fifty years of retrospection. As for Indians, he picked them off at a thousand yards whenever his poor eye-sight allowed, but he did not despise them. They were dangerous.

Bill Gropper turns out to be a humorous and accurate portraitist of the cowboy. Wherever it was that he had his cowboy incarnation, he caught the gesture of man and horse, and of stubborn cow, to perfection. He only missed one bet. He should have drawn that funny picture of a cowboy on his best roping horse, dragging on the end of his lariat a hefty yearling, its four feet braced, its tail in the air, its eyes rolling, and its head screwed around for a bawl of protest. That would have rounded off the cowboy saga. "I'll tell you, stranger, the brutes is hard to ketch and hard to hold, and there ain't no money in beef anyhow." That's the glamor of cowboy life.

MARGARET LARKIN.

Wall Street

<i>People Vs. Wall Street, By William Floyd.</i>	Vanguard Press.	\$ 2.50
<i>Sold Out! By Edward Dean Sullivan.</i>	Vanguard Press.	\$ 2.00
<i>The Story of Wall Street, By Robert Irving Warshow.</i>	Greenberg Publishers	\$ 5.00
<i>The Lost Shirt, By Joseph Anthony,</i>	Brentano's	\$ 1.00

None of these books bring information that is startlingly new; the adroit deals of Wall Street manipulators are a part of our national mythology, familiar, in retrospect, to even this Wall street expert for the *New Masses*. Yet each of the first three of these volumes presents clearly and dramatically a different phase of American finance, which today in its difficulties seems more fascinating than it was during the spectacular market rise of the last two or three years. Those fortunate enough to have lost millions in the recent crash may not find reading about the debacle an absorbing pastime, but the amateur may pick anyone of these and be sure of a dizzy two hours, upon learning what he has missed.

People Vs. Wall Street is an extremely clever arrangement of facts and quotations from the financially great, into the record of an imaginary trial in which all of Wall street is charged with being insane. The initial hypotheses of the Street, that by enriching itself it enriches the people, is efficiently punctured. So are other favorite slogans of the Raskobs, Schwabs, Rockefellers, etc., protesting the altruism, the nobility, the wisdom of the results emanating from the financial machine.

Sold Out! is a series of fragments, human-interest snap-shots taken during the market crash. Edward Dean Sullivan's sardonic, apocalyptic style and view-point make them vivid. *The story of Wall Street* traces clearly the growth of the American financial structure, and the careers of its outstanding figures. This is a particularly competent work, dove-tailing many of the men and their coups that are familiar as isolated legends, but that should really be considered in their relationship to the whole story of their day, to be more fully understood.

The Lost Shirt is a collection of verse and prose-bits not dangerously humorous.

KENNETH FEARING

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WORKERS' ART

A monthly department for reports and discussion of Workers' Cultural Activities.

Workers Follies

The German Workers Revolutionary Theatre, Die Prolet-Buehne, in New York, has been in existence for five years. The activities of the group during this time consisted of lectures, newspaper articles, plays, meetings and discussions.

On February 15 the group gave its first performance of a *Workers Follies* in the Labor Temple, New York, entitled *Strasse Frei—Es Wird Geschossen* (Clear the Streets—the Bullets are Flying). The performance was a huge success. After the affair the audience stayed for hours to discuss the work of Die Prolet-Buehne. Many other German organizations were attracted to the work of our group.

A word on the method of production should prove of interest. The review, composed of an array of scenes, satirical gags, orchestra and stage effects, was written, staged and produced cooperatively. Every step of the review was a collective job. There was a division of labor so that the experience and talent of each member could be utilized. We found in this experiment that the method allowed for more concentrated effort, less friction and greater discipline than production under an individual director.

We didn't stay content with only this collective treatment of the *Follies*. We also asked for collective criticism from the audience after the performance. Each member of the audience was given a questionnaire asking point by point whether the review was clear in its meaning, whether it was correct politically, if its staging was done properly, etc. The criticism was read after the performance and provided a most interesting discussion besides proving very helpful to the work of the group itself. The questionnaire given to the audience before the performance served also to stimulate their interest in every step of the *Follies*.

Instead of describing our methods in articles and speeches we took another step. On April 26 Die Prolet-Buehne staged another Review which was preceded by a performance showing the *Workers Follies* from the first germ of an idea to the final dress rehearsal.

Committee meetings, writing sessions, rehearsals, all were given true to life. Following that, a performance of the new *Follies* was staged with changes made from the preceding one, based on the collective criticism of the audience which we found very helpful.

We believe our experience in this respect should be of interest to other workers theatre groups.

New York, N. Y.

EUGENE BONN, Sec'y.

Workers Films & Theatre in England

It may interest your readers to know something of the activities of their fellow workers this side of the pond.

On January of this year a triple bill was played at the Annual Conference of Teachers' Labour League held in Beechcroft Settlement, Birkenhead.

The Merseyside Film Society and Workers Theatre Movement made its first appearance with an adaption of Joe Corries' *In Time of Strife* when the second act was staged as a one-act play and called *The Traitor*. It deals with the struggle against poverty and starvation of a miner and his family in a Scotch village during the Coal Strike of 1926. The death by starvation of the miner Jock's sister leaving a starving family behind her turns the somewhat easy going politically muddled-Jock into a class conscious fighter who drives his daughter's sweetheart Baxter—a black leg—into the street to face the angry crowd, which besieges the house. The curtain goes down on Jock fired to revolutionary action going out to lead the angry masses.

It got over by its sheer reality which the players (themselves



May Day!

—Drawn by Eitaro Ishigaki

victims of the Class War) had no difficulty in making realistic.

This was followed by the dramatic group of Teachers Labour League (a section of Workers Theatre Movement) giving a Russian play: *The New Saint*. It was adapted from a story in *Azure Cities* by kind permission of the publishers Martin Lawrence.

The New Saint centres round the life of an old Russian woman (Fetinya) who despite the Revolution prays to her saints and ikons for protection of her rickety leaking hut, etc. The entrance of workmen sent by the Soviet Housing Committee to roof her leaking hut seems to old Fetinya an answer to the prayers she had been saying to the picture of a new saint she found whilst gathering her sticks. She tells the glad tidings to the fat and oily Father Ivan who calls to collect mass kopecks and who incidentally relieves the old woman of her little store of Easter eggs. The climax is reached when Father Ivan discovers the new saint is none other than Karl Marx! ! ! whose picture he tears from the wall and spits on and leaves the old woman crooning over the saint who will keep her warm and safe.

The play offers excellent opportunity for propaganda of Soviet progress at the same time showing up the parasitic hold of the church on the ignorant peasantry.

Every point went home and was hugely enjoyed by the audience who called for three curtains.

The third contribution was Moliere's *Meek Doctor* given by the Beechcroft Players. The play was well done and admirably staged but its artificial cleverness failed to interest. Possibly it suffered by proximity to the realism of the other plays.

Owing to permission being withheld by the local Council (with a Labour Majority) to show a film entitled *Journey to Soviet Russia* at the conference, a protest meeting of workers decided to form a Film Society and show films of value and interest to the workers. We have been trying since January to overcome the legal and technical obstacles that stand in the way of any working class scheme but our society is now launched and on March 27 we are showing a Russian film *Two Days* also *The Shadow of the Machine* and a travel picture *The Thames*.

MARY PAUL.

Parkgate, Cheshire
England.

NEW MASSES



May Day!

—Drawn by Eitaro Ishigaki

NEW MASSES



May Day!

—Drawn by Eitaro Ishigaki

Come On, You Poets!

New Masses:

Mike Gold says a mouthful: "I am thru, I guess, with the form-searchers." If some artists wish to form little cliques all to themselves and be geniuses in mysterious, esoteric ways, they have my full permission. I will be sad that they go that useless way, but I will be sadder still if the *New Masses* becomes their chosen medium. Because it will have nothing at all to do with the masses. Poetry may not play the major part that prose does in the class struggle. But it plays a part. Everything that plays a part should be utilized to the fullest. Lenin's dictum concerning art is still valid.

We need poets in the class struggle with a sense of discipline and purpose. We have the poets. Herman Spector, Mike Gold, H. H. Lewis, Myron Chaffee, A. B. Magil, Ralph Cheyney, Norman McLeod. But the poets, with a few exceptions, often go haywire. A man of the calibre of H. H. Lewis gives us "Penny Arcade" stuff. Herman Spector is beset with the chase after form. But thank the stars for Magil's poem in the November issue: "Thus He Died." Cheyney gave us a splendid poem in a recent issue.

The poems in the last issue of *New Masses* were all to the mustard. Kreymborg's poem was the kind I like to see published once in a while. Did I knock him once? I take it back in regard to this effort. It's ironic, packs a punch, good propaganda. May he write more of it for us. In free verse Jim Waters is always good and Magil does nearly as well in "Notes About Winter." Baker rings the bell with "Insanity." Altogether the poetic output this month is kosher. . . . and then some.

Some poets who are afraid of throwing away their reputations on "propaganda" may, because of it, build better and more enduring ones than they ever dreamed of.

Come on, you poets, who have the gift, give the working class the best in you!

HENRI GEORGE WEISS.

Tucson, Arizona.

At a Workers Art Exhibit

New Masses:

At the Brownsville Youth Center, about 150 workers came to the symposium of the John Reed Club in connection with the art exhibit.

This place is fairly typical of workers clubs throughout America. No soft leathered chairs, carpets, portraits in gilded frames and bald headed gents snoring on sofas. Narrow hall, hard benches, a small stage and piano, and a table with checkers and a set of chess. Mostly young men and women in their twenties eager for knowledge and alert to the struggle going on in the world to-day. You sense the feeling of a growing power here and youth—that is why hard benches really don't matter—no aesthetes here, but young workers from the shops of New York come to view an exhibition of revolutionary pictures and discuss these pictures with the artists.

I. Klein, Morris Pass, Adolph Wolf and Joseph Pass spoke for the John Reed Club. Then the bombardment started. This painting with a red flag in it, yes, we like the red flag and the workers demonstrating but there is something lacking in it to give us . . . great emotional value . . . these lithographs of oil tanks, they look clean, sturdy and beautiful, that is how they will look after the revolution . . . what is cubism? . . . why always picture policemen beating workers, why not show a worker *landing on a cop once in a while*, we are in a militant period, comrade . . . do we want the pictures labeled? some said yes, some said very definitely no, we understand them, they are our pictures and these are our artists . . . the problems of a revolutionary artist in a bourgeois world were discussed . . . and a still-life or a landscape, have they a place in these clubs, this group as a whole was not antagonistic to them.

And so forth until midnight. So many questions to discuss, and the night is so short and to-morrow back to the shop again. Will the John Reed Club establish an art school for us? . . . And to think some of the artists wondered at first if the workers would be interested in their stuff . . . !

New York, N. Y.

JOSEPH PASS.



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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION,
ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST, 24, 1912.
Of New Masses, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1930.

State of New York: County of New York

Before me, a Notary in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Walt Carmon, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the managing editor of the *New Masses*, and that the following is, to the best of knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher: New Masses, Inc., 112 E. 19 St., N. Y. C. Editor: Michael Gold, 112 E. 19 St., N. Y. C. Managing Editor: Walt Carmon, 112 E. 19 St., N. Y. C. Business Managers: None.

2. That the owner is: The American Fund for Public Service, 2 West 13 St., N.Y.C. James Weldon Johnson, Pres., 2 West 13 St., New York City; Robt W. Dunn, Sec'y, 2 West 13 St., New York City; Morris L. Ernst, Treas., 2 West 13 St., New York City.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgagees, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner, and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 12th day of April 1930.

WALT CARMON, Managing Editor.

Max Kitzes, Notary Public.

(My commission expires March 30, 1932)

LETTERS FROM READERS

A Farmer on Parasites

Friends of *New Masses*:

To me and my type, raised and *raided* on the farm, socialization doesn't sound half as silly, for the farmer at least, as does capitalism.

Ten minutes ago I left a lecture hall where I had heard one of my professors speak. It was a good lecture; but it got my goat when I saw how one of those parasitic hanger-ons of the big money who sat a few seats in front of me, swallowed every word that gave him hope of religious salvation from the sin of having made his living by watching others do the work. I am not anti-religious, except, when such nonsensical persons use it as an escape from the facts of this life.

I am not a communist, but the dividing line grows thinner every day that I spend with people who think education is a matter of becoming content with occasional handouts from big business.

I think you people are the pioneers of a new social order. Here's to you! If I weren't a coward, I might give myself to work wholeheartedly with you.

Yours for a new day!

SVEND GODFREDSEN

Des Moines, Iowa.

Sinclair & Good Beer

Editor *New Masses*:

Upton Sinclair says in April issue on page 22 that he "would never use a word like 'hepatic'". In *Money Writes* page 132 he says: "When I suggest that a man who takes alcohol into his system destroys his hepatic cells, Mencken says to hell with his hepatic cells." . . . Page 170 "All my life I have lived in the presence of fine and beautiful men going to their death because of alcohol. I call it the greatest trap that life has set for genius. . . the prohibition amendment is the greatest step in progress since the freeing of the slaves" . . . page 174 "Nothing would please me more than to whoop again (for *Elmer Gantry*) —but it won't be for a novel which jeers at the Protestant churches of America because they put the prohibition laws on the statute books and are going to stick to the job until they get the laws enforced."

Sinclair mourns the loss (he thinks by booze) of O'Henry, Crane, Bierce, London, Sterling, Cook and several unnamed small potatoes among our contemporaries. In what way is the labor movement the worse? Bierce (cut off at the untimely age of 75) was a Hearst prostitute who proposed that labor agitators have their tongues torn out: the rest gave us their gentle sympathy and a hell of a lot of use it was. In brief the worthy Upton is a classless reformer, a humanitarian. He regards the freeing of slaves, prohibition, the world war and such matters not as skirmishes or bat-

ties in the class war but as "steps in progress"—or the reverse.

Most workers drink. A \$900 a year worker, exposed to industrial poison and accident can't pet himself like a \$4,000 a year writer. If he lives long enough to get liver cirrhosis he'll find it not as bad as a cop's blackjack. I'll trade a small cirrhosis for the smashed and aching shoulder and squashed ear that the boss' cossack gave me!

I'd sooner drink good beer than Scarface's hooch but the prohibition issue is not vital to workers, as for instance, unemployment pay, right to picket, right to parade etc. All the workers I know take a drink now and then. A few get royally sozzled once or twice a year. They aren't much use next day. What of it? Men quit the labor movement from cowardice or laziness or to become bourgeois. Red workers do not become sots—bohemians and artists do, but not revolutionists.

JIM KERR.

New York, N. Y.

Not Noble—Merely Clean

Editor *New Masses*:

The young woman correspondent, who, thru the March *New Masses*, asks "What can I do?" is in the same predicament as I and just a few other thousand white collar slaves in America.

I was born into a white collar family of emigrated English commoners, who belong to that group who try to class themselves as of the middle class, or petty bourgeoisie. Working in offices with comfortable and sometimes semi-luxurious office furniture equipment, often in close proximity to the officials of the company, their position is somewhat analogous to that of the butlers in aristocratic and rich families, who imagine themselves on a higher level than others.

These white collar slaves, who are tag-end members of the petty bourgeoisie, are the great individualists of America, who consider the American Federation of Labor a radical organization; the majority of whom refrain from joining unions of office workers, yet share in any benefits secured by these unions (for example, advantages secured by the Postal Clerks' Union and the Federal Employees' Union); who damn Negroes and employ the cheapest available colored scab labor for maid service. They belong to that class Jack London has described as "neither noble nor alive, but merely clean"—they are mentally sterile.

Sincerely yours,

RICHARD F. PAIGE.

Washington, D. C.

Margaret Larkin—now in Santa Fe, New Mexico, is at work on a book of cowboy songs to be published this fall.



E. Merrill Root—was born in Baltimore, Md., 1895. He has lived mostly in New England, and graduated from Amherst college, where he studied under Robert Frost and Alexander Meiklejohn. He was a conscientious objector during the war. He has been teacher and lecturer on modern literature, contributor of poetry and prose to the *New Masses* and other leading periodicals, and author of two books of poetry—*Lost Eden* and *Bow of Burning Gold*. He is a contributing editor to the *New Masses*.

In This Issue

Phillip Schatz—is a 22 year old New York newspaperman making his first appearance in the *New Masses*. He has worked for newspapers in Cleveland and Omaha since he was 18. During the coal strike in 1928 he was publicity assistant for the National Miner's Relief Committee in Pittsburgh.

A. Lebedensky—21 years old, was born in Nikolaev, U. S. S. R. In this country, at 16 he continued his studies in evening school at the Art Institute and the Hull House in Chicago while working days in a factory. This is his first published work.

J. Q. Neets—is the pen name of a well known critic and author.

E. Phillips Russell—has been on the staffs on the N. Y. *Call* and the British *Sunday Worker*. His play in this issue has been produced by workers' groups in England. He is author of *Red Tiger—Adventures in Yucatan and Mexico* and other volumes.

Art Young—making his first appearance as dramatic critic continues to see the humor in the London Conference. On his first report from London (in our February issue) the N. Y. *Times* said he must have been "psychic" for "he was seen in the flesh on that day at a party in New York." Art Young insists that was only his way of saving expenses for the *New Masses*.



NEW MASSES



E. Merrill Root—was born in Baltimore, Md., 1895. He has lived mostly in New England, and graduated from Amherst college, where he studied under Robert Frost and Alexander Meiklejohn. He was a conscientious objector during the war. He has been teacher and lecturer on modern literature, contributor of poetry and prose to the *New Masses* and other leading periodicals, and author of two books of poetry—*Lost Eden* and *Bow of Burning Gold*. He is a contributing editor to the *New Masses*.

Railroaded to Prison

Editor New Masses:

The frantic reign of terror which seems to sweep the country periodically is now making itself evident in New York. A few weeks ago 16-year-old Harry Eiseman was sent to serve a five year term in a reformatory because he absented himself from school to attend the March 6th Unemployment demonstration in Union Square. On April 11th, after a trial where every bit of defense testimony was barred, Foster, Minor, Amter, Lester and Raymond were found guilty of "unlawful assembly." Next they are to be tried for felonious assault, and they will undoubtedly be railroaded to jail for the longest terms possible.

The situation is even worse outside of New York. In Georgia, two Communists face hanging because they distributed leaflets concerning the unemployment situation. This is considered "inciting to insurrection." In Ohio, two high school girls have been sentenced to ten years in jail for the same "offense." It is called "sedition" there. More than a thousand workers all over the country have been imprisoned. Several hundred more are being held for deportation. The newspapers, as usual, are largely confining their attention to murders, rapes, and fires. Not a newspaper reader in a thousand is even remotely aware of the seriousness of the situation. With the hope, therefore, of informing a wider public of the facts of the matter, the John Reed Club, in conjunction with the International Labor Defense, is circularizing the liberal writers, educators, and artists in America, asking them to protest against a hysteria which promises to equal, if not excell, the ugliest days of the Palmer "Red" scare.

JOHN REED CLUB, Pub. Com. E. A. SCHACHNER.

Mexican Cotton Pickers

Dear Editors:

I was about to write and ask if March *New Masses* had been stopped at Las Vegas as had *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. But the unemployment number came today; a number that is needed to let workers know their pain is not regional. It will let the people out here who think the east is a gold field know they're not alone. The Spanish Americans are used out here like the Negroes in the South. A family of ten lives on forty dollars a month—eating nothing but Mexican beans and chili. But even the Spanish-American is not the cheapest waged. The Mexican across the border is dragged in for cotton picking at nothing the hour and two bucks the day—sunrise to sunset—a damn long day in summer in a low altitude under a white steel sun.

"NOTHING CAN STOP THE U. S." Seven million monkey-wrenches in the works would make a clean sweep and stop this slow decay.

Albuquerque, New Mexico.

DON MCKENZIE

A Request from France

Michael Gold:

We have read one of your poems in the last issue of the *Links-Kurve* of Berlin. We are working here on a collection of poems by revolutionary writers of various nationalities and should like to prepare at present a special collection of American poets.

Could you put us in touch with the revolutionary comrades or give us their address so that we might get in touch with them? At the same time I should like to ask you to send us a number of your own poems for this collection as well as for a world anthology of proletarian and revolutionary poetry which we expect to publish later. In conclusion, we should be obliged to you if you will put us in touch with writers of the black and yellow races.

With fraternal greetings,
Paris, France.

TRISTAN REMY

IN THIS ISSUE

Writers—

Michael Gold, Art Young, Grace Lumpkin, Phillip Schatz, Ed Falkowski, E. Phillips Russell, Charles Yale Harrison, Harry Alan Potamkin, E. Merrill Root, Margaret Larkin, Joseph Kalar, Kenneth Fearing, Henry George Weiss, Joseph Pass, Ralph Cheyney, J. Q. Neets, James Rorty.

Artists—

William Gropper, Louis Lozowick, Art Young, Walter Quirt, William Siegel, Adolph Dehn, A. Lebedensky, Jan Matulka, I. Klein, Eitaro Ishigaki, Hugo Gellert.



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—UPTON SINCLAIR

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—JOSEPH KALAR

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Book Bargains

—Drawn by Wm Siegel

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